

Politics and the Soviet Army

Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet Union in the Khrushchev Era, 1953-1964

A dissertation submitted by Joshua C. Andy as part of the requirements for the degree
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Any errors or mistakes in this work are exclusively mine. All views expressed here are my responsibilities and are not associated with individuals or institutions named.

Glossary of Russian terms and Abbreviations

Aktiv-Communist Party activists

CC (TsK)-Central Committee; *Tsentral'nyi komitet*

CPSU (KPSS)-Communist Party of the Soviet Union; *Kommunisticheskaya partiya sovetskogo soyuza*

Edinonachalie-single officer command

Gorkom-Communist Party City Committee

GRU-Army intelligence services; *Glavnoe razvedyvatel'noe upravlenie general'nogo shtaba*

GPU-Main Political Administration; *Glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie*

ICBM-Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

IRBM-Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile

KGB-Committee on State Security; *Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti*

MRBM-Medium Range Ballistic Missile

MVD-Ministry of Internal Affairs; *Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del*

NATO-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NCMD-North Caucasian Military District

NEVZ-Novocherkassk Electric Locomotive Works

NKVD-People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs; *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*

Oblast'-province

SAC-Strategic Air Command (USA)

SAM-Surface-to-air Missile

SLBM-Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile

SRF (RVSN)-Strategic Rocket Forces; *Raketnye voiska strategicheskogo naznacheniya*

USSR-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; *Soyuz sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh respublik*

WTO-Warsaw Treaty Organisation; Warsaw Pact

Introduction

Structure, organisation, an idea of *esprit de corps*, and hierarchy characterised the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Throughout the history of the Soviet Union only the Soviet Armed Forces had the potential to rival the CPSU in those qualities and were able to be an organised locus for potential opposition. A sense of professionalism was instilled in the Soviet Armed Forces, not only from those 'Red Commanders' of the Revolution and Civil War, but also from those junior, noncommissioned officers who were holdovers from the tsarist regime. The primary focus of this study is on the immediate post-Stalinist era while Nikita Khrushchev was First Secretary of the CPSU. Bridled by Stalin's hold over strategic and armed forces policy, after his death, the Soviet Armed Forces became an institution that illustrated a strong sense of military professionalism, while at the same time serving the Soviet regime.

With a focus on five case studies that occurred during the Khrushchev era 1953-1964, this thesis argues that the military attempted to remain apolitical throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Previous studies of Soviet civil-military relations have focused on the levels of cooperation or competition between the CPSU and the Soviet armed forces. This study argues however, that the ebb and flow of that relationship can be explained by the selection of personalities, or agents, by Khrushchev to posts of military command. Officers were promoted based on several factors. However, Khrushchev increasingly promoted officers to positions of command who he deemed were more personally loyal to him and were willing to put that loyalty above their duty to the Soviet armed forces. Khrushchev chose personal loyalty over an officer's military professionalism and expertise when appointing them to posts at the Ministry of Defence,

the Soviet General Staff, and to the command posts in the branches of the Soviet military and key military districts around the Soviet Union.

Historical Background, 1917-1941

The Bolshevik Party strove to create a military distinct from the Russian Imperial army, moreover distinct from the Western traditional model. In 1917, the Bolshevik Party supported the demobilisation of a traditional, standing army; they favoured the reliance for defence on the idea of a popular militia force along territorial lines. Driven by ideology, the decision to forego a standing army was quickly scrapped out of realist necessity. Still embroiled in war against the Germans, until the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918, Bolshevik Russia needed a standing army capable of defending the nation. While fighting against the German army, Bolshevik forces had simultaneously to fight against other foreign interventionists and a civil war. Necessity trumped ideological concerns for the Bolshevik elite, many of whom had not served in the military. In March 1918, Lenin tasked Leon Trotsky with creating a professional military force to defend the young Soviet state. Quickly forming an army along traditional lines, Trotsky's most controversial decision "was his reliance on former tsarist officers to train and even lead units of the Red Army."¹ Other Bolshevik leaders scorned the use of such class enemies.

Georgii Zhukov served under Tsar Nicholas II in the capacity of a noncommissioned officer. From the beginning of his service to the new Bolshevik government as a

¹ Roger Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience, A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3.

noncommissioned officer, Zhukov was not seen as suspicious as general officers; however, that stigma for some would follow throughout their careers. Noncommissioned officers were perceived by the Bolsheviks as class allies whereas general officers from the former tsarist forces were tainted with a bourgeois background. Bolshevik leaders believed those noncommissioned officers were better suited, from a standpoint of class, to serve in the new Bolshevik armed forces. Despite the class differences, approximately 8,000 former tsarist officers 'willingly put themselves at the disposal of the Soviet Republic out of feelings of patriotism - not support for the revolution.'² Feelings of duty, patriotism, and military professionalism, many officers and noncommissioned officers from the tsarist military served the Soviet government. Regardless of class background, officers served whatever authorities governed the newly formed Soviet state. Taking these ideas forward, we can see their implications during the Khrushchev era in Zhukov's career, but also in some officers decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the debates over strategy, and during events at Novocherkassk.

Developments that changed the face of warfare and tactics had been difficult subjects to discuss in the Soviet Union. Mikhail Tukhachevskii, one of the former tsarist officer who served in the Red Army openly criticised other officers' support of a defensive doctrine for the Soviet Union in the interwar period. While other officers advocated a defensive posture for the Red Army, Tukhachevskii advised for an offensive strategy based on armoured infantry, maneuver, and encirclement. It was not until the late 1920s that the Red Army sufficiently adopted modern warfare strategies and techniques. Larger mechanised forces became a primary component of the Red Army. Internal debates had been a factor within the Soviet armed forces

² Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience*, 9.

since its inception. Should the Soviet Union develop a defensive or offensive military doctrine? What was the role of modern weapons, namely tanks, in warfare? How was new technology to be integrated into the Soviet system? These questions were asked and debated throughout the interwar period and were a driving debate throughout the Khrushchev era. Although Tukhachevskii was liquidated in the purges of the military in 1937, his ideas were again pertinent when the military made changes to doctrine, strategy, and tactics through the Second World War. After World War II the debate shifted from the role of tanks in modern warfare to the role of nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems in modern warfare.

Civil-military relations during the Khrushchev era, 1953-1964, were fluid, changing as the officers holding high military positions were appointed and replaced. However, the military was never in direct opposition to the CPSU's leadership of the Soviet Union. As time progressed, the military became more professionally aware of their status in society but also fiercely protective of those areas believed to be within their sole purview. Each side, the CPSU and the Soviet armed forces, believed that certain facets of their relationship to be the sole purview of their domain. CPSU officials, namely Khrushchev, saw the Party to be the authority in regard to overall military doctrine and strategy. Questions arising on what type, defensive or offensive, of force and conduct of war the Soviet Union would pursue were to be answered by the Party. Those decisions were then to be implemented by the armed forces of the USSR. The military's role in foreign and domestic affairs were also to be dictated by the Party. Conversely, the military, specifically the high command saw it as their duty to protect their soldiers. When details of pay, pensions, housing, and tactics arose, they were to be seen as the authority, with the knowledge to correctly advise the CPSU on courses of action. Each side saw their purviews as

important areas - certainly the military became an interest group when advocating for better treatment of retirees, and their role in civilian protests. Skilling and Griffiths argue that interest group experts and specialists, as the military can be seen, had a greater voice in decision making in the 1950s and 1960s.³ As will be argued below, the military's role as an interest group increased when Zhukov was named to the Presidium and his successors were increasingly asked for their counsel and expert opinions at meetings of the Party leadership. When those domains were believed to be impinged on, the relationship between the parties became stressed. That can be seen not only in the arguments over military doctrine and strategy but also during the events of the Novocherkassk uprising in June 1962. Khrushchev's tactic was to promote officers believed to be more inclined to his policies so that the line between the Party's domain and military's purview concerning armed forces policies might be blurred. By 1962, Khrushchev's tactic of blurring the military-Party distinction had failed; military officers, even below the General Staff and Ministry of Defence level were outwardly questioning policies pursued by the Khrushchev Presidium.

Ever increasing throughout the Khrushchev era was a sense of military professionalism within the Soviet officer corps. Samuel Huntington's seminal work on civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, defined military professionalism with three facets: expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.⁴ Huntington defined the military professional, specifically the officer corps, as holding those three characteristics. His work is largely concerned with the experience of the US and other Western militaries and was not written with specific reference to

³ H. Gordon Skillings and Franklyn Griffiths, editors, *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1971), 10.

⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 8-10.

the Soviet Union. Huntington's terms are his own. Nonetheless, his ideas and definition of military professionalism are used in this study. Those three facets can be seen throughout the cases examined below. Expertise was held by the officer corps. A centralised repository of military knowledge, the equation of education plus experience, created an objective standard of military competence.⁵ Expertise also has an academic branch. Officers conducted research, studied previous experiences, and through writings, disseminated their findings. From their expertise, officers were able to plan, organise, and direct the armed forces.⁶

Huntington's second facet was responsibility. With their knowledge and expertise, an officer corps had the responsibility to use that expertise to serve society. Their responsibility was the protection of society from outside security threats. According to Huntington, that facet also has a moral component. Not only did officers and the military have a responsibility to protect society, they had to have a moral consciousness. Professionalism was knowing when to correctly and morally use their expertise. The officer corps has the responsibility to use their knowledge and expertise to protect society. Morally, they cannot use that expertise against society.⁷

The third and final facet of military professionalism in Huntington's model was corporateness. Corporateness within the military equates to a sense of unity and cohesiveness. Discipline is essential. Corporateness is an important criterion for the military to be considered a profession with its own set of norms and values.⁸ Corporateness encompassed the first two

⁵ Huntington, 8.

⁶ Huntington, 11.

⁷ Huntington, 10.

⁸ Huntington, 10.

facets and enabled the officer corps and military to hold a cohesive set of values, thoughts, and goals.

This study will use Huntington's definition of military professionalism to illustrate the increasing sense of professionalism within the Soviet armed forces from 1953 to 1964. For the core group of officers studied within gained their primary education of military knowledge in the prewar years under Stalin and gained their experiences during the trials and successes of the Second World War. The use of that expertise and acquired knowledge was tested and questioned throughout the Khrushchev era. Technology and weapons developed tested assumptions on the conduct of war. War could not be fought on the same tactics and lessons learned from the last war. The responsibility to protect the nation from nuclear war increased; however, their moral responsibility was tested both in the Novocherkassk uprising and the Cuban operation.

Historiographical Study

The historiographical discussion about Soviet civil-military relations has been focused on various theories on the interaction between the CPSU and the Soviet military leadership at the level of the institutions - the Party and military structures. Previous theorists have taken a structural approach to the study of Soviet civil-military relations by focusing in the institutions of the CPSU and Soviet armed forces. There are several theorists who have written on Soviet civil-military relations. Each has focused their writing on a specific period, often the years immediately preceding the publishing of their major work. The theories focused on the nature of the interaction between the CPSU and the Soviet military. Was the relationship a zero sum game

as Roman Kolkowicz argued in 1967? In 1998, William Odom, writing primarily on the Gorbachev era, saw the relationship as one of cooperation rather than a zero sum. Timothy Colton (1979, 1990), while focused on the Brezhnev era, provided a synthesis of Kolkowicz and Odom's ideas. Colton viewed civil-military relations as a mix of cooperation and conflict.

More recently, Roger Reese has made the attempt "to humanise the discussion of an important Soviet institution." Reese strongly feels that the Soviet armed forces have been dishonoured by scholars as simply a "monolithic and faceless organisation."⁹ Earlier theories have relied on a study at the macro level of interaction, between the institutions of the CPSU and the commanding bodies of the Soviet armed forces. In 2005, Dale Herspring, while focused on the post-Soviet Russian state, saw civil-military relations as an example of divide and conquer.¹⁰ Herspring viewed civil-military relations in the same light as Kolkowicz, as primarily a conflict driven relationship. Herspring's work chronicled the debate about civil-military relations along with his own conclusion on the nature of that relationship. Reese's publications have focused the rank and file of the Soviet armed forces and how civil-military relations affected those soldiers.

According to Herspring and Kolkowicz, from the 1920s the military increasingly lost autonomy in conflict with its civilian authorities. After World War II, the trend reversed itself until the 1960s and 1970s under Brezhnev when military autonomy reached an all-time high due to a more cooperative relationship.¹¹ That reversal occurred during the Khrushchev era. The

⁹ Roger Reese, *Red Commanders, A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), ix.

¹⁰ Dale Herspring, *Russian Civil-Military Relations* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), x. Herspring focused his argument on the appointment of General A. Lebed as Russian National Security Advisor by President Boris Yeltsin. Herspring argued Yeltsin played senior military officers off against one another throughout his tenure.

¹¹ Herspring, xv.

important questions that arise from previous work on civil-military relations revolve around the nature of that relationship. Was it as Herspring and Kolkowicz argued; or were they closer to that suggested by Odom and based on cooperation? Can the relationship be better explained as the synthesis argued in the work of Timothy Colton?

Roman Kolkowicz's book about Soviet civil-military relations, published in the years immediately following Khrushchev's ouster, is the first study, to draw conclusions based specifically on the Khrushchev era. Cooperatively published by Princeton University Press and the RAND Corporation, Kolkowicz's study is scholarly and offers a review of work published that might have policy implications for US foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. Introducing his approach, Kolkowicz stated that his work is "a study of institutions in conflict."¹² Kolkowicz wrote that the 'essential characteristics of authoritarian political systems are internal coercion and external militancy, and to achieve these postures the ruling elite must maintain powerful security organs and large military establishments.'¹³ While the internal security organs of the KGB and MVD were integrated into the structure of the CPSU and intensely loyal to the regime, the Soviet military, according to Kolkowicz would seek to dissociate itself from Party control.¹⁴ While under the constraints of imposed Party controls, any perceived ideas or maneuvers on the part of the Soviet military gave the CPSU reason to question loyalty, thus causing the conflict-driven relationship developed in Kolkowicz's theory. Kolkowicz argued that the Party would take any measures necessary to maintain control over the institution tasked with the defence of the Soviet state.

¹² Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), vii.

¹³ Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, 8.

¹⁴ Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, 3.

After a discussion of the historical background of the relationship between the CPSU and the Soviet armed forces, from the October Revolution until the death of Stalin, Kolkowicz demonstrated his theory of a conflict-driven relationship with a focus on the Khrushchev era. The case of Marshal Georgii Zhukov, Minister of Defence of the Soviet Union, was Kolkowicz's primary example; however, the role of the GPU (Main Political Administration) permeated Kolkowicz's work. Tracking the political qualities and standards within the military was the primary task assigned to the GPU by the CPSU. The GPU was to monitor as well as indoctrinate political 'education' in the Soviet armed forces. It operated at all levels of organisation with the armed forces of the Soviet Union. Kolkowicz argued that the role of the GPU in civil-military relations was a primary source of conflict. While political control over the military was the primary concern of the GPU, it was not the primary source or the focus of civil-military relations. Kolkowicz focused on Zhukov as a strong-willed military professional, which is a valid characterisation. While that holds true in this study, Zhukov holds importance as the driving force of military professionalism. Agreeing at times with Khrushchev, but fiercely arguing against him in others, above all Zhukov strove to protect the military's areas of expertise in strategy, tactics, officer and rank and file housing, as well as training. Those points are where this study disagrees with that of Kolkowicz.

Odom concentrated his influential study on the Soviet armed forces as they collapsed side by side with the Soviet Union. His work discussed the relationship between the army and the Party in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The construct of Odom's study was focused on the bureaucratic nature of the Soviet armed forces, then continued to describe the military in the decade before its demise. As Odom stated, "the Soviet Armed Forces went

complaining but passively into the dustbin of history, to use Trotsky's phrase."¹⁵ Odom focused his study on the years of Gorbachev's tenure at the helm of the Party. He drew from historical examples from the Khrushchev era such as conventional force reduction to indicate change implemented during the Gorbachev regime. From new government structures, military reforms, especially the economic reform, and arms reduction, Odom painted a picture of constant change, which led to flux within the military. The primary impetus to oscillation within the echelons of military leadership was Gorbachev's dogged pursuit of the linked goals of military doctrinal change and arms control.¹⁶ While the policy goals set forth by Gorbachev directly at the United Nations in December 1988 led to the resignation of the Chief of the General Staff, Odom's thesis throughout the study is one of cooperation and a sense of unwillingness by the military to support the faltering Party after 1988.

In a structure unparalleled in Western democracies, the Soviet military officers held positions as both Party members, and sometimes Party office holders, and as members of the state bureaucracy in the organisation of the Ministry of Defence. Unlike Western democracies, the Soviet military decision making, or policy-making as Odom termed it, occurred behind the closed doors of the Politburo. There were no open hearings in front of legislatures, no lengthy feasibility studies, only deliberations among close associates behind closed doors.

No Western political leader could bring a mere dozen of his close associates into a closed room, deliberate with them based only on materials prepared by the staff of his military department and reviewed only by his political staff, and then push through his preferred policy (occasionally over the objections of a disgruntled fellow official), a policy sometimes involving scores of billions of dollars, at a cost not even known by himself in terms of market value of the resources

¹⁵ William Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1998), ix.

¹⁶ Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*, 118.

involved. Yet [that] is precisely how the general secretary of the party [sic] made military policy in the Politburo.¹⁷

Odom's study did illustrate well the decision-making process when applied to the Khrushchev era. The chapter on the Cuban Missile Crisis details such application of Odom's theory. Nonetheless, Odom saw greater cooperation between the military and the Party than this body of work does. While the decision-making process throughout the Khrushchev era paralleled that elucidated above, there was less cooperation. Khrushchev was confronted with objections from both the military high command and within the highest echelons of Party. Throughout, Odom draws the conclusion that the military served in an advisory capacity, which was accepted or disregarded at the whims of the Party leadership. According to Odom's theory, whether taken or not, the military's recommendations were the limit of their decision-making powers. The Party was the final arbiter of policy. His conclusion is challenged below in the main case studies examined here but also specifically in the role of the military in the formulation of military strategy and doctrine.

While Colton focused his thesis on the Brezhnev years, it is easily applicable to the Khrushchev era. Colton's work examined the years following Khrushchev's removal from power until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Colton's study was primarily concerned with the GPU (*glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie*) and its role in Soviet civil-military relations. Its role was the political education and indoctrination of the military rank and file, but also to maintain an ideological watch over military officers. Colton saw the GPU as a 'school of communism' for the military.¹⁸ Nevertheless, through the 1950s and 1960s, junior political officers' greatest

¹⁷ Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*, 37.

¹⁸ Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1979), 70.

sources of anxiety were not their commanders they were assigned to but their immediate superiors in the GPU.¹⁹ Colton saw party discipline and military discipline intrinsically linked. As the Party pursued policies that affected military discipline, especially the policies of criticism and self-criticism, the relationship between the CPSU and the military changed. Military discipline was accepted and a necessity for Party discipline in the armed forces.²⁰

While Colton viewed civil-military relations as a mixed system, at times conflict-driven and at others driven by cooperation, he argued there were two key aspects that one should not overlook. The relationship revolved around key issues of policy implementation, foreign policy, and primarily military issues [such as pay, housing, training, and discipline]. Core issues for the military were pay, discipline, promotions, and tactics. Non-core issues were more aligned with issues of foreign policy. Dale Herspring argues that under Khrushchev and Brezhnev the military's control over core issues and values expanded, while under Stalin they were nonexistent.²¹ Doctrine and force structure, two none-core areas traditionally dominated by the Party, were increasingly controlled by the military during the Khrushchev era, and by the 1970s civilians were almost totally excluded from the decision-making process in those two areas.

Colton's view was that throughout the history of the Soviet Union, both civil and military authorities accepted the power of the CPSU.²² While that fact is not disputed by the research below, what was the driving force in civil-military relations? Specifically, what factor allows us

¹⁹ Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority...*, 115.

²⁰ Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority...*, 119.

²¹ Herspring, xvii.

²² Timothy Colton, "Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet Union," in Timothy Colton and Thane Gustafson, eds. *Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1990), 12.

to characterise civil-military relations as a conflict-driven or cooperation-driven relationship, or a relationship based on a synthesis of both? What caused civil-military relations in the Khrushchev era to be a synthesis between Kolkowicz and Odom more similar to Colton? No theorist has explained civil-military relations beyond the implications of total control of the state by the CPSU. While disputing the purely political study and theorising of Kolkowicz, Colton, Odom, and Herspring, Reese focused solely on questions of the development of the concept of military professionalism in the Soviet military. Reese attributes a lack of professionalism within the military to the founding tenets of the Soviet state. By purposefully following a policy of avoiding the creation of a professional officer corps and caste, the founders of the Soviet state quashed the development of military professionalism in its infancy.²³ Reese's study has focused on the founding moments of the officer corps, its actions during the Great Terror, especially the purge of the military in 1938-1941, their service during the Second World War, during the conflict in Afghanistan, and the August 1991 putsch. The primary focus of his work is on those case studies, while the Khrushchev years is seen as a transitory period from Stalin to Brezhnev during which the military and Khrushchev had an increasing contentious relationship.

During the twentieth century, military professionalism has been defined in purely Western, democratic terms, defined by theorists and scholars in Western countries. Reese posits the question how one can use those definitions of professionalism in the Soviet sphere if by design, from the beginning of its existence, the Soviet military spurned Western military thought. He argues that military professionalism, whether applied to the Soviet Union or Western, democratic states, has a universal definition. Reese concluded that the Soviet military

²³ Reese, *Red Commanders*, 2.

subordinated itself to its civilian masters in the CPSU. “Despite policy disagreements,” the military accepted that subordination.²⁴ However, military strategists, namely Tukhachevskii and Zhukov, both studied the military concepts and strategies being developed by their contemporaries in the West. It was the Party, primarily under Stalin, who forced the military to dissociate with their Western counterparts. Prior to the outbreak of WW II, Tukhachevskii and his closest adherents were proved correct as Zhukov commanded the enemy forces in war games severely defeating the ‘Soviet’ force using Western tactics that Tukhachevskii had been a staunch advocate of in the 1930s - namely the use of combined arms, mechanised and mobile infantry, and the use of deep pincer attacks and encirclement. To the detriment of the Soviet Union, those tactics were not adopted nor heavily studied after the demise of Tukhachevskii, but they were successfully used by the German *Wehrmacht* against the Soviet Red Army throughout the first two years of the war on the Eastern Front.

Throughout the Khrushchev era the relationship between the CPSU and the Soviet armed forces was dependent upon one factor, the personalities of those in power in both institutions. It is the argument of this dissertation that it was the selection of personality, the selection of agency, by Khrushchev which determined the characterisation of that relationship. Khrushchev chose officers to lead the Soviet military apparatus that were deemed more pliable, and more willing to support his ideas for military reform and doctrine over officers who had proved they honored their military expertise and professionalism over becoming sycophantic ‘yes-men’ to the CPSU leadership. Increasingly, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Khrushchev knowingly chose mediocrity over meritocracy. Khrushchev was willing to elevate mediocre

²⁴ Reese, *Red Commanders*, 4.

officers to positions of leadership in the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff, and key military districts in order to have a perceived cohesive military command that would support Khrushchev's scheme for changes to the structure and doctrine of the Soviet military.

The personality leading the CPSU was static; Khrushchev was in office from 1953 until 1964. Before Kennedy's meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna in 1961, Charles Bohlen had a study of Khrushchev drafted.²⁵ It is a character study of Khrushchev designed to provide background to Kennedy before that meeting, but it also shed light on the man who drove changing civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. The report began: "By any standards, Khrushchev is an extraordinary person. He is simultaneously a handshaking, backslapping, grass-roots politician who could draw a good vote in any democracy, and a shrewd and ruthless manipulator of power in the best totalitarian tradition."²⁶ Decisive yet indecisive, often over the same issue, Khrushchev was:

Capable of extraordinary frankness, and in his own eyes no doubt unusually honest, Khrushchev can also on occasion be a gambler and a dissembler expert in calculated bluffing. It is often hard to distinguish when Khrushchev is in his own eyes voicing real conviction and when he is dissembling. The boundary line between truth and stratagem, between the pursuance of real conviction and of tactical advantage, is in any event much less clear in the Russian communist mind than ours.²⁷

²⁵ Charles 'Chip' Bohlen was a US diplomat and Soviet expert. He served in the US Embassy in Moscow when diplomatic relations were restored in 1934. Bohlen replaced George Kennan as Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1957. Later Bohlen served as Ambassador to the Philippines and served as US Ambassador to Paris under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

²⁶ President's Meeting with Kennedy Vienna, June 3-4, 1961, Background Paper, Khrushchev: The Man, His Manner, His Outlook, and His View of the United States, Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Box 234a, Folder 4 of 5, "Trips and Conferences".

²⁷ President's Meeting with Kennedy Vienna, June 3-4, 1961, Background Paper, Khrushchev: The Man, His Manner, His Outlook, and His View of the United States, Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Box 234a, Folder 4 of 5, "Trips and Conferences".

Bohlen's presidential briefing accurately reflected Khrushchev's perceptions of domestic political machinations as well as a more global outlook for the Soviet Union.

However, Khrushchev's schemes and ideas made it difficult to manage working with him. The Soviet military was commanded by two very different professional officers while Khrushchev was in power. Strong personalities permeated both the CPSU and Soviet Armed Forces. Taubman's work on Khrushchev strongly argues that Khrushchev's personality had an impact on his policies. Zhukov and Malinovskii, both just as strong, were varied personalities when leading the Ministry of Defence. Throughout his career Zhukov was a strong, charismatic, and almost fierce disciplinarian. During World War II, Zhukov was one of a few people who argued with Stalin on military matters. Marshal Malinovskii and Zhukov served at different levels of command during World War II. Those different experiences followed them through the Khrushchev era. Malinovskii served as a military commander in areas where Khrushchev was a political officer; thus there was a bond between them from their common military service. Once Zhukov was replaced by Malinovskii as Minister of Defence, Khrushchev believed he had a more pliable and friendly officer at the head of the Soviet armed forces. Whereas as Zhukov stood his ground on military matters, Khrushchev believed Malinovskii would support his ideas lock step. It was exactly those varying personalities that determined civil-military relations during the Khrushchev era. Rather than the confrontation or cooperation theories argued by Kolkowicz and Colton respectively, civil-military relations were fluid, depending on the circumstance, at times a strong sense of cooperation among the civil and military leaders, and at others fierce protectorates of their perceived spheres of influence. Those interactions, however

we characterise them, were vastly determined by the personages commanding the CPSU and the Soviet Armed Forces and their interactions during the four case studies examined in this thesis.

Generally, the issue of personality can be correlated to the level that officer become politically 'active.' Officers that Khrushchev deemed more pliable, and more concerned with career advancement became more politically active. Robert Conquest characterised officers in four classifications based on their military professionalism and political activism.²⁸ Whereas officers such as Zhukov and his associates were attempting to increase professionalism and the power of the army, they were not engaged in Party machinations. Other officers such as those from the 'Stalingrad Group' were given quick promotions out of political considerations and became "identified with political maneuvers almost to the exclusion of their military links."²⁹ Zhukov was the anomaly. Whereas Conquest concretely argued Zhukov's apolitical attitude, as Minister of Defence, he was bought into the Presidium through co-option. A few questions need to be answered. Why did the leadership, especially Khrushchev, bring Zhukov into the Presidium knowing that he was a strong national hero in the eyes of the Soviet public? Did Khrushchev consider Stalin's distrust of Zhukov following the war? Did Zhukov allow himself to be exploited by Khrushchev or did he genuinely feel recognized by Khrushchev as a military leader? Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Khrushchev sought out officers whom he deemed politically pliable, who put career ahead of military professionalism.

The argument here that the selection of personality, or agents, to leadership posts within the Soviet armed forces, goes beyond a historical study and adds to the literature of structure

²⁸ Robert Conquest, *Power and Policy in the USSR, The Study of Soviet Dynasties* (New York; St. Marten's Press, 1961), 330.

²⁹ Conquest, 330. Please see appendix A for biographical data on the officer included in the Stalingrad Group.

versus agency debates. This dissertation defines structure as the institutions of the Soviet state: the CPSU, armed forces, governmental bureaucracy, and the security apparatus. Agency or agents are defined as those individuals who are leading or members of the above institutions. The core argument throughout the dissertation is agents drive civil-military relations in the Soviet Union and Khrushchev attempted to manipulate that relationship by the selection of agents to command the Soviet armed forces. Does the institutional structure inherent in the Soviet system explain the ebb and flow of civil-military relations? Does the selection of agents, of those men chosen by Khrushchev to lead the armed forces apparatus, and their actions within those offices go further to explain the cooperation and conflict, the ebb and flow, of the relationship between the civilian authorities and the Soviet armed forces? As Giddens wrote, ‘actors’ knowledge of the practices in which they participate is already an element of those practices.’³⁰ The selection of officers for higher military and government office along with the interactions in the communist system that they served together explain the civil-military relations of the Khrushchev era. Giddens further stated that ‘structure is both the medium of generating interaction and at the same time the reproduced outcome of it.’³¹ Giddens’ theory of structuration, as opposed to the structural-functionalist model, goes far to explain this theory of the selection of personalities in Soviet civil military relations. Both societal structures and societal agents are equal in Giddens’ structuration theory. Giddens argued that orthodox functionalist theories do not adequately explain structures and reproductions.

Giddens advocated that a duality of structure, an integral part of his theory, goes further to explain societal systems and interactions. Structures are reproduced by agents over and over.

³⁰ Anthony Giddens, *Studies in Social and Political Theory* (New York; Basic Books, 1977), 11.

³¹ Giddens, *Studies in Social and Political Theory*, 14.

Structure, as defined by Giddens, is the ‘patterning’ of social relations. More simply stated structure are the ‘rules’ of social interactions.³² Cerny’s definition of structure more fully develops the idea that structure both constrains and gives opportunity to agents for action and to make choices. According to Cerny’s 1990 work structure gives agents the resources and rules on how to play the game - structure both limits and propels the actions of societal agents.³³ Certainly, military officers were constrained and given opportunity within the Soviet political system. Officers had to outwardly conform to Soviet ideology to advance up the military ranks. However, while the system served as an opportunity, it also served as a restraint to action. Marshal M.V. Shaposhnikov’s actions at Novocherkassk in June 1962 questioned the ruling Party’s decisions, and put him on a collision course with authorities, which led to a shortened military career and criminal proceedings against him.

Khrushchev and his officers were reproducing variants of civil-military relations that had been ongoing since the founding of the Soviet state. Leaders had chosen officers to high positions that they personally knew, and in some cases elevated them on the basis of their loyalty at the expense of their military expertise. Stalin elevated those he served with at the battle for Tsaritsyn during the Russian Civil War to command posts during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s - Marshals Voroshilov, Budenny, Timoshenko, and Tukhachevskii. As Tukhachevskii illustrated a greater capacity for original thought and military prowess, he was increasingly in the crosshairs of Stalin. Khrushchev reproduced this model by elevating officers from the Battle of Stalingrad to high commands within the Soviet armed forces. Skilling and Griffiths go further and argue

³² Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outlines of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley, CA; University of California Press, 1984), 16-17.

³³ Philip G. Cerny, *The Changing Architecture of Politics: Structure, Agency, and the Future of the State* (London; SAGE Publications, 1990), 4.

that both Stalin and Khrushchev sought loyal officers to these posts but also officers that had not served in previous conflict or office in and around Moscow.³⁴ Officers from the periphery were bought to the center by both Stalin and Khrushchev.

Giddens quoted from Marx to further illustrate a basic component of his theory of structuration. Marx wrote that, 'men make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing.'³⁵ Giddens argued that structuration illustrated how structure has an impact on the actions of agents but how agents change those structures as well. In his theory, Giddens stated that agents occupy multiple positions within societal relations that correspond to their specific social identities.³⁶ Applying Giddens' theory to Soviet civil-military relations can explain the relations between commanding officers and the higher echelons of the CPSU. Marshal Zhukov became a complicated agent as he was bought back to the command structure of the Ministry of Defence in early 1950s and as he was elevated to leaderships positions in the CPSU. Zhukov and Malinovskii served those roles differently as their personal friendship and histories with the Party leader were different. Partly because Khrushchev believed Malinovskii to be a more pliable officer, more concerned with his career than the policies of the military, Khrushchev and Malinovskii had a much more cordial relationship than his predecessor. Nonetheless, it was Zhukov who had to navigate, what Giddens called the modalities of co-presence, his position as

³⁴ H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths, editors, *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1971), 149.

³⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Werke*, vol. 8 (Dietz Verlag, 1960), 115. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, xxi.

³⁶ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, xxv.

head of the armed forces and a member of the highest decision-making body of the CPSU.

Malinovskii did not occupy the same specific social identities as Zhukov had.³⁷

Khrushchev's selection of agents, of military officers to lead the Soviet armed forces placed those officers in positions to act - to base their actions on their acquired military knowledge and expertise in the defence of the Soviet Union as military professionals or to act in their own best interests of their careers by placating Khrushchev's desires and goals for military policies. Those agents have the ability to influence the structure of the system.³⁸ Officers such as Zhukov and Malinovskii have the ability, and with their titles and offices, the power, to influence some control over military policies of the CPSU. Inherent in that power is the understanding that wielding the power of their titles and offices may run them afoul of the CPSU. Conflict and cooperation in the system is thus based on those perceived realms of control discussed above but also on the actions of those agents chosen by Khrushchev to command the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

Source Material

In my source material, I have relied on personal accounts from key individuals such as Khrushchev and Zhukov and contemporary sources from Soviet newspapers and journals. New interpretations of sources and former works on the subject of civil-military relations will be found in the overall study. Debates on military policies and affairs during the Khrushchev era took place in the open, in the public press of the Soviet Union. The press was used to wage a

³⁷ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, xxv.

³⁸ Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outlines of the Theory of Structuration*, 16.

war against Malenkov in 1954 and 1955, just as the military doctrinal reforms were widely discussed in the 1960s in various literary organs of the Party and military. Therefore, to gauge opinions and viewpoints of numerous officers, it was important to look at coverage in *Pravda*, the Party newspaper, in *Izvestiya*, the government newspaper, and *Krasnaya zvezda*, the official organ of the Ministry of Defence. Dissent against Khrushchev's military policies was published in the pages of these publications by senior officers. At other times, officers attacked one another as in the case of Zhukov ouster, which played out on the pages of *Pravda*. Officers also published works, whether monographs or in professional journals. Numerous articles published in the Ministry of Defence's internal journal, *Voennaya mysl'* (Military Thought), provide information about internal debates among high-ranking officers.

Memoir and other primary literature sources must be used with a grain of salt; however, they are used in this study to give a sense of the inner thoughts of participants in various events. Given the research questions and the importance of agents, memoir literature have been appropriate sources, despite their distortions of history. Memoirs were able to give a sense of a persons inner thoughts and importance those individuals gave to events. Various editions of Khrushchev's memoirs have been consulted, both in Russian and English. Khrushchev was a strong-willed personality, which comes out in his memoirs. He is not apologetic in his memoirs, but does staunchly defend his policy initiatives and ideas. He strongly believed in his prerogatives where the defence and security of the Soviet Union was concerned. Marshal Zhukov's memoirs were consulted as well. However, various editions were used due to that fact that censors heavily edited the earlier editions; a complete version of Zhukov's memoirs was published after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Zhukov wrote his memoirs through to the end

of the Great Patriotic War; he did not include his time as Minister of Defence. Memoir material are used to get a sense of the individuals own thoughts on topics; they must be used alongside other material to gauge factual accuracy.

Archival sources from the General Department of the CPSU (from RGANI, but held on microfilm at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham) were used for information on Soviet forces stationed abroad, specifically for the Soviet Group of Forces Germany. Documents pertaining to Soviet operations in Hungary, during the Novocherkassk uprising, and the Cuban Missile Crisis were found in the Hoover Institution's collection. Collections of published documents from the Soviet archives were used to supplement varied access to archives in Moscow. The main collection of documents used in this study was Aleksandr Fursenko's edited three-volume series on the Presidium in the Khrushchev era published by Rosspen, *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964*. The 2001 collection of documents on Marshal Zhukov, *Georgii Zhukov: stenogramma oktyabrskogo (1957 g) plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty*, provided archival evidence of his advocacy of policies, attendance at important Presidium meetings, and material concerned with his removal in 1957.

The collections of documents and archives of Soviet sources both in the United Kingdom and the United States were integral to completing this study due to difficulties gaining access to archives in Moscow. At the time of the research, Russian archives were not allowing access to postwar documentation concerning the Soviet military, specifically where nuclear programs were concerned. Funding for research trips to Moscow limited the amount of time spent at RGANI and GARF. Time in Moscow was used effectively, and access was gained to the Central Military Archives reading room. However, no materials were forthcoming after access was gained.

Reliance on Russian archival material housed in the UK and US has limited my search; nonetheless, the study is supported by primary resources.

Using available sources this study aims to re-conceptualise the debate on civil-military relations in the Soviet Union during Khrushchev's tenure. This study uses those available documents to illustrate through the case studies below how previous works and theories only answered questions on the subject to a point without delving into why. Theories on civil-military relations, whether conflict-driven or cooperation-driven, only looked at the events causing that relationship. Previous studies characterised civil-military relations without explaining why that relationship developed in such a way. By reevaluating previous studies and using new sources, this study's characterisation of civil-military relationship, to some extent agreeing with Timothy Colton, goes further to explain that the selection of personalities, or agents, by Khrushchev and a growing sense of professionalism were the driving force behind the relationship between Khrushchev, the CPSU, and the Soviet armed forces from 1953 to 1964.

Case Studies

Upon Stalin's death in 1953, an almost stranglehold grasp on military doctrine and thought was finally relaxed. The first case study focuses on the debate that continued throughout the Khrushchev era over the role of military doctrine and thought on the strategy and tactics of the Soviet Armed Forces. That debate included the role of advancing nuclear weapons technology and ballistic rocketry. Questions were asked by both military professionals and Party apparatchiks on the impact of those technologies on troop levels, conventional armament

production, and, moreover, on the political and ideological ramifications of those technologies. Was war with the West still inevitable? Peaceful coexistence, as well as peaceful economic cooperation, was a policy now to be followed. Should disarmament policies be pursued? Debates over those questions and more occurred among military officers themselves, academics, but also among the leaders of the CPSU. More than once the leadership of the CPSU held differing views on doctrine and especially nuclear armaments from those of the military officers holding commanding posts within the General Staff and Ministry of Defence. Military leaders debated the use of conventional weaponry and forces on a nuclear battlefield. However, Khrushchev was adamant that nuclear weapons were to become the primary weapon and workhorse of the Soviet armed forces on future battlefields. Battlefields, as military leaders had experienced in World War II, were to be a thing of history. Now battles would take place hundreds, if not thousands, of miles apart on the territories of the enemies being targeted with ballistic missiles.

Zhukov's role in civil-military relations is the focus of the second case study. Marshal Georgii Zhukov, Minister of Defence from 1955 to October 1957, was protective of the role of the Soviet Armed Forces over their own ranks as opposed to the CPSU and the Main Political Administration (*glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie*, GPU); however, he was also strongly in favor of the role of military professionals in providing for the defence of the Soviet Union. Zhukov's commanding personality moved the Soviet military towards a greater sense of military professionalism, although, in the end, Zhukov's insistence on autonomy from political and Party controls led to his dismissal from both the military and Party leadership.

Throughout his leadership of the Soviet Armed Forces, Zhukov was hampered by the rise of the so-called 'Stalingrad Group' of officers, both military and political, who had served alongside Khrushchev at Stalingrad and southern fronts as they fought westward towards Germany in World War II. That group of officers owed their posts and promotions to Khrushchev's patronage, and therefore, were more compliant in supporting Khrushchev's views of the military and reform. By the 1960s, despite that patronage, the 'Stalingrad Group's' support was not always forthcoming for Khrushchev's policies. Fractures developed, and in some cases, officers chose to be military professionals rather than politically pliable.

While Khrushchev saw Marshal Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovskii as a more pliable Minister of Defence, Malinovskii proved to be well-qualified at supporting Khrushchev's military policies while at the same time focusing on the concerns of the more conservative military commanders. The role of Marshal Malinovskii is discussed in the third case study. The choice of Malinovskii as the new Minister of Defence illustrated the choice by Khrushchev of mediocracy over merit. It was known that Zhukov supported and even called for Marshal Ivan Konev to replace him as Minister of Defence. Konev was passed over by Khrushchev believing that the officer was of the same ilk of Zhukov and too independently minded. Malinovskii has been seen as more sycophantic like other members of the Stalingrad Group. By looking at Malinovskii's speeches in the 1960s, when the Stalingrad Group really began to fracture, one can argue that he was able to toe the line on military policies being espoused by Khrushchev and supporting the need to retain modern conventional forces in the Soviet Union's arsenal.

Those fractures within the Stalingrad group in 1960s became evident during the 1962 events in Novocherkassk and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The military's role in suppressing the

June 1962 workers' uprising in Novocherkassk is the focus of the four case study. Historians and journalists, both Western and Russian, have discussed and argued about the role of Soviet military and troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Whereas Baron argued that the Soviet military played an important, deadly role at Novocherkassk, contemporary sources, and KGB cases against military officers, who took part in the operation, show that the Soviet Armed Forces did not fire the deadly shots in June 1962. Those shots instead came from divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Actions of specific officers during the Novocherkassk operation proved how far they had come along the road to military professionalism. The Soviet Red Army viewed its role as to thwart a foreign enemy, not to ensure domestic order, which military leaders regarded as 'policing.'

Finally in the fifth case study, although the military leadership became complacent in supporting Khrushchev's policies, the role of the Soviet High Command in the Cuban Missile Crisis, from planning, to implementation, and reflection, was at times supportive and at other times outright against the Cuban gambit. Officers, who did not support the operations, were relieved of their commands, and others supported harebrained schemes they personally knew were not plausible. While one of the greatest logistical feats of the Soviet military since World War II, the Cuban Missile Crisis failed to redress strategic parity with the United States as was Khrushchev's goal.³⁹

The Soviet Armed Forces did not actively participate in the removal of Nikita Khrushchev, nor did they actively support Khrushchev's positions. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, military officers questioned the operation in the Caribbean. From strategy, to further

³⁹ Interview with Sergei Khrushchev by author, Pittsburgh, PA November 2002.

reductions to conventional forces, Khrushchev was thwarted by military officers questioning his motives and goals as they pertained to military spheres. Overall, Soviet officers confined themselves to the concerns of the military, and they did not stray into area of political and Party purviews.

While, I challenge Kolkowicz's assertions on the antagonistic relationship between the CPSU and the Soviet military, theories put forward by Colton and Reese are questioned as well. Although Colton and Reese have shown the relationship between the CPSU and the military to be primarily driven by cooperation, I intend to add to that argument below. Personality is of utmost importance; individuals are key to understanding that relationship. Whereas Reese focuses on the social aspects affecting the Soviet armed forces, I argue against his viewpoint that the military always accepted their subordination to the CPSU. Never did the military become outwardly anti-Party during the Khrushchev era, but the officer corps did voice strong opinions both for and against policy decisions made by their political leaders. I believe that the military did make conscious decisions to oppose Khrushchev on military policies and reforms out of an aware sense of military professionalism, which stemmed from a perceived incursion into the military's scope of interest within the three areas enumerated by Huntington: responsibility, military expertise, and corporateness.

It was these areas, which caused the relationship between Khrushchev and the commanding officers of the Soviet armed forces to move fluidly between conflict and cooperation. Officers who put professional values above Party or political considerations were removed from decision-making posts within the hierarchy of the Ministry of Defence and General Staff. As his tenure progressed, Khrushchev looked to gain support for his policies in

more pliable military officers who were more concerned with their careers to the detriment of military values. Khrushchev chose officers for leadership posts by selecting those who were more concerned with their own advancement. Khrushchev did not elevate officers first based on their military prowess but on suspected personal loyalty. It was a system of mediocracy, not one of meritocracy.

Chapter 1: Evolution of Soviet Strategic Thought and Military Doctrine

Writing a year after Khrushchev's removal, Robert Conquest stated: "Apart from the Party itself, the Soviet Army [was] the one organised body in Russia with its own esprit de corps, professionalism, and political ability to carry out moves to place its nominees in power."¹ Conquest aptly described why the Party was so concerned with the control of the Soviet Armed Forces, specifically the Soviet high command (the Soviet General Staff and Ministry of Defence). Within that framework played out the roles of such men as Khrushchev and Georgii Malenkov, and the military personnel such as Marshals Zhukov and Malinovskii. A compliant military was in the best interests of the CPSU; the paths taken to achieve that goal were at the core of Soviet civil-military relations. Khrushchev's selection of agents, of those officers to lead the Soviet armed forces faced important tests throughout the 1950s and 1960s. What were perceived as sycophantic personalities became more nuanced in their outward support for Khrushchev's reforms for the military. Perceived to be pliant to Khrushchev's wishes, officers increasingly voiced nuanced opinions. The role of agents in the decision-making process where military doctrine was concerned became increasingly important after the removal of Zhukov. The duality faced by the Party for control and the necessity for the defence of the Soviet Union created a malignant dichotomy in which reliance on the military for defence allowed military commanders to wrest some control from the Party.

¹ Robert Conquest, *Russia After Khrushchev* (New York; Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 171.

Although discussed in the introduction, a brief historiographical outline is necessary as it relates to the development of Soviet strategic thought. Political scientists and Sovietologists have examined and written on civil-military relations in the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. Those theories concerned themselves with characterizing civil-military relations into two divergent paths. Whether civil-military relations are driven by cooperation or conflict has been the primary thesis of prior research. Led by the necessity to explain the interactions of institutions within the Soviet Union, prior studies have lacked a focus on personality, especially the individuals at the highest echelons of leadership within Soviet institutions. This chapter argues that as the agents promoted to command positions in the Soviet military changed from the late 1950s to the 1960s, Khrushchev believed that he was surrounding himself with a more compliant officer corps; however, this group became divided over the best use of their knowledge, expertise, and military professionalism. In the confines of this study, the focus is on those individuals at the top of the leadership pyramids within the CPSU and the Soviet armed forces. How did those individuals interact when formulating defense policies of the Soviet Union? To answer that question, this chapter presents a case study of decision-making on policies and doctrines arising from the development of nuclear weapons, their attendant delivery systems, and other rapidly advancing military technologies of the early Cold War.

The chapter begins with a discussion of civil-military relations theories advanced since the 1950s, and suggests that they do not go far enough in explaining the relationship between the CPSU and the Soviet Armed Forces during the 1950s and 1960s. Further, it is intended to show that by examining the relationships and interactions amongst the leaders of the CPSU and the military leadership in the 1950s and 1960s, we can hypothesize that the selection of agents, or

personalities, to higher office within the armed forces chain of command by Khrushchev goes further to explain the span of civil-military relations from the founding of the Soviet state.

Following the death of Stalin, military offices were faced with a new structural paradigm which allowed them to have greater insight into the discussion and decision-making on military doctrine and strategy. Previous attempts by military professionals to participate in military and strategic thought had been stymied by Stalin, who acted as the supreme arbiter of doctrine and strategy for most of his rule.

After the discussion of current theories, this chapter examines the pre-WWII writings on military doctrine. During the late 1920s and early 1930s there was an open dialogue, although heavily monitored, on contemporary military doctrine and military thought. Socialist and Western thought was extensively studied. Leading those discussions were two bright military minds: Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevskii and Aleksandr Svechin. Both were the leading military strategists of their era. According to Andrei Kokoshin,

Svechin's *Strategiya* is a major work which incorporates the best of military thought from Russia, the young Soviet power, Germany, France, and other foreign countries. This work was the result of Svechin's two years (1923-1924) of teaching a strategy course at the Military Academy of the [Workers' and Peasants' Red Army]. No other works on this theme were published in the USSR until 1962, when *Voennaya Strategiya* [Military Strategy] was published under the editorship of Marshal of the Soviet Union V.D. Sokolovskii.²

Tukhachevskii was ahead of his time, as compared to his Soviet and European contemporaries, when it came to planning new modes of combat and the integration of forces. Mobile infantry and mechanization were two ideas championed by Tukhachevskii. Both Svechin and

² A.A. Kokoshin and V.V. Larionov, "Origins of the Intellectual Rehabilitation of A.A. Svechin," in A.A. Svechin, *Strategy* (Minneapolis; Eastview Publications, 1992), 4. Originally published as, *Strategiya* (Moscow; Voennyi Vestnik, 1927).

Tukhachevskii were the bright military minds of their era; both were dismissed by Stalin as imperialist stooges. Their ideas and their lives were lost in Stalin's purge of the military.

It was only with the relative openness of the 1950s and 1960s that both officers and their ideas were rehabilitated. Studied again, the officers' ideas were expanded on. Again in the 1950s and 1960s, military thinking and strategic thought were no longer taboos nor only the sole purview of Stalin. As happened in the early interwar period, the military more openly discussed and studied doctrine, strategy, and tactics.

Delving into the case study of the policies and decisions on military doctrine, we can discover how Khrushchev used those policies to give him an additional edge over others, such as Malenkov, in the leadership struggle immediately following the death of Stalin. He then attempted to use these policies to initiate changes in foreign policy directed toward the United States and its allies in an era of detente and peaceful coexistence. At the same time, Khrushchev tried to decrease military expenditure, as technological knowledge increased, thereby enabling him to increase the output of consumer goods and a higher standard of living to the Soviet citizenry.

Literature Study: Civil-Military Relations Theories

Numerous scholars have studied civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. However, a majority of the studies concentrated on the periods after Khrushchev was ousted from power. Timothy Colton's seminal study was published in the late Brezhnev era, while William Odom studied the collapsing Soviet military system and the respective civil-military questions raised at

this turning point in history. Concurrent with Odom's work, Condoleezza Rice used a historical model to explain the implications of Mikhail Gorbachev's policies on civil-military relations. Only Roman Kolkowicz's work has focused on the earlier Cold War period of Khrushchev's Soviet Union. Dated though it is, Kolkowicz's work has set the framework in which one can study the Khrushchev era and civil-military relations and military and defense policies.

Dale Herspring incorporates a historical study of the Khrushchev era into his 1996 work on post-1991 Russian civil-military relations. Lacking a semblance of autonomy from the 1920s onward, the military was freed from its ideological shackles upon Stalin's death in March 1953. The military was given a greater voice in Party discussions where military policy was concerned. Whether that was a seat on the Presidium for Zhukov, or having military officers attend Presidium meetings after 1957, the CPSU understood that they needed to better utilize the expertise and educational experiences of military officers. Increasing throughout the Khrushchev era, the foundation was set in the 1950s and 1960s that rocketed military autonomy to an all-time high in the 1960s and 1970s, which manifested itself in cooperation in civil-military relations in the Brezhnev era.³ While discussing civil-military relations studies by Western scholars, Herspring argues contemporary theories have been oversimplified. Whereas some theories argue that civil-military relations in the former Soviet Union were centered on a conflict-cooperation rationale, Herspring's argued that throughout the history of the Soviet state, the relationship between these two integral institutions cannot be boiled down to conflict or cooperation. Only a combination of those two factors adequately explains civil-military relations in the context of the CPSU and the Soviet high command. As military officers became more

³ Dale Herspring, *Russian Civil-Military Relations* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1996), xv.

‘vocal’ in support of or against CPSU policies, conflict and cooperation ebbed and flowed. As the military agents in the Soviet societal structure became more professional, the rules of society were tested and sometimes changed.

For Kolkowicz, civil-military relations in the Soviet Union was a zero-sum game. Kolkowicz’s seminal study was published three years after the ouster of Khrushchev. His primary task was to focus on answering two questions: where do interests coincide, and where do those interests create conflict? The high command of the Soviet Armed Forces and the leadership of the CPSU were the two protagonists in this struggle for influence and status. This relationship was conflict driven; it was unstable in the eyes of Kolkowicz.⁴ Although the emphasis of Kolkowicz’s study was the Khrushchev era, the study was published without the opportunity to look back on the 1950s and 1960s with hindsight, within the context of the history of events to come. Archives were not available for study and dissection. Although access to the archives is greater than when Kolkowicz’s work was published, military sources are rare. One must read between the lines of other archival sources from CPSU material as well as the military press. Perhaps Kolkowicz’s lasting contribution to the study of civil-military relations in the Khrushchev era is his thorough literature search of the Soviet press, both governmental and military.

Integral to Kolkowicz’s thesis is that in communist regimes the military attempts to distance itself from the Party apparatus. Their goal was not to be disloyal to the state or Party, but they must gain some semblance of military professionalism; they must remain untainted from

⁴ Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), introduction.

the aura of politics.⁵ Therein is the root cause of the conflict within civil-military relations.

What the military perceives as its stride for military professionalism, the CPSU regarded as a push to be anti-Party.

William Odom, retired Leutientant-General, US Army and former Director of the National Security Agency, found fault with the zero-sum outlook towards Soviet civil-military relations. There was an interchangeable system where allegiance to the Marxist-Leninist ideology reigned.⁶ In his view, Odom saw it the duty of officers to carry out policy, which was set by the government and CPSU. Officers were not to shape policy. By contrast Kolkowicz argued that conflict directly arose when officers attempted to delve into the realm of policy creation, Odom argued that was at its core unprofessional, thus could not create conflict. Simply, officers did not view politics as their realm and stayed above the fray.

While those studies are still relevant, Western historiography on civil-military relations in the Soviet Union, what is more important concerning the 1950s and 1960s, have not been covered extensively since Herspring's 1996 study. Brian Taylor published a history of civil-military relations in 2003, but his discussions of the 1950s and 1960s relied heavily on contemporary studies and focused on key events such as the removal of Zhukov. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western historiography has yet to cover this key era in detail. None of the studies have focused on the actions of agents within the Soviet structure. Those studies have not focused on the interactions of agents in the dynamically changing structure of civil-military relations after the death of Stalin.

⁵ Kolkowicz, 3.

⁶ Herspring, xvii.

Khrushchev's Leadership Tactics

Nikita Khrushchev used the tactic of divide and conquer in his attempt to thwart military opposition to his policies. Soviet leaders historically used this tactic to control the military leadership and to garner support for specific policy initiatives. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, similar tactics were used by Boris Yeltsin.⁷ We can divide the Khrushchev era into two distinct eras. One can divide the years Khrushchev was in power into a time when Zhukov's influence was on the rise through his time as Minister of Defense, from January 1955 to October 1957. During that first period, Khrushchev allied himself with the Stalingrad group of younger officers. Thus, a conflict emerged between younger officers versus Zhukov and those who served at his level during the Great Patriotic War, was created. Not only was a service chasm created but also developed was a generational difference as Khrushchev looked to a younger generation of officers for support of his military policies. Khrushchev was able to manage those two groups against each other to develop policies. Zhukov's downfall in 1957 initiated the second phase of civil-military relations within the Soviet Union. His influence was a key to that relationship despite Khrushchev's wishful thinking; however, the removal of Zhukov had little effect in making the Soviet military into a more pliable tool to support the CPSU's policy initiatives. In that second period, the Stalingrad Group fractured as Khrushchev implemented policies officers saw directed at their areas of sole purview such as tactics, maneuvers, and housing. In each period, Khrushchev assisted that group that actively supported policies being espoused by him.

⁷ Herspring, x. Herspring argued that Yeltsin's appointment of Aleksandr Lebed as National Security Advisor in 1996 was used to divide and conquer the high command and play some officers off one another.

Khrushchev attempted to divide and conquer the leadership of the Soviet military. While Zhukov was Minister of Defense there was focused around him a group of officers, generally older, higher-ranking, officers from the Great Patriotic War, who had served in the central command headquarters, or *Stavka*. Younger officers, who served on *Front* or Army commands, were generally opposed to the influence of Zhukov and increasingly supported Khrushchev in his push to modernize and fund the military. Those younger officers rose to prominence under Khrushchev, and many owed their status and positions to the First Secretary. That group of officers, for the most part, had served as officers at the Battle of Stalingrad, and the movement from Stalingrad through Ukraine, Belorussia, and Poland into Germany. Those officers served where Khrushchev had been posted as a political officer. He knew these men and their capabilities. Military competency was not a deciding factor in Khrushchev's appointments; nonetheless, previous meritorious service had propelled those officers to where they were in the early 1950s. Furthermore, offering promotion Khrushchev garnered obedience. He promoted them to high rank and brought them into senior positions in the Party and the military leadership as his power grew within the leadership of the CPSU. It was hoped the favors would be returned. Khrushchev was promoting mediocrity over meritocracy. He was consciously choosing officers perceived to be more favorably disposed to his own thoughts on the military despite those officers' shortcomings in military expertise.

However, as time showed, even a pliable corps focused around the Stalingrad Group was no guarantee that the military would lend support to defense and military policies conceived by Khrushchev. As we shall see, the officer corps that worked in concert with Khrushchev's

thinking in the 1950s became divided themselves in their support for Khrushchev in the 1960s, especially after the debacle of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Khrushchev stressed the importance of an original, Leninist ideology in Party work but also within the development of both foreign policy and military decisions. Writing almost ten years after Khrushchev's ouster, N.A. Lomov (General Staff) incorporated the numerous advances to military science and technology that came about in the preceding decades. Lomov is an important primary source giving insight into the thought and decision-making process during the early Cold War. In his text, Lomov described as the development of Soviet military theory and doctrine in relationship to scientific-technical developments. Lomov served as general editor of the volume, but it was compiled by a group of officers and generals who also served as students and faculty members in the military academies. The book analyzes the qualitative changes in weapons and technical outfitting of the Soviet army. As part of what can be seen as an internal study of the development in Soviet doctrine and strategic thought, *Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs* is an important source on civil-military relations and the debate on doctrine in the Khrushchev era. Prevalent throughout Lomov's work is the impact of ideology on the Soviet military and civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. Discussing what Khrushchev called a revolution in military affairs, caused by the incorporation of nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems into the arsenal of the Soviet Union, Lomov places ideology at the foundations of all decisions. Lomov wrote: "For the Soviet Union as well as for the other nations of the socialist community, the decisive significance of policy in

implementing the tasks of the revolutionary transformation of military affairs has been determined by the necessity of the military defense of socialism against imperial aggression.”⁸

While Lomov acted as overall editor of the volume, leading military scholars of his day contributed greatly to the final publication. Major General V.V. Voznenko, candidate of military science (at time of original publication), commented on the means of waging war and methods of military operations in an era of rapidly changing military technology. Voznenko wrote, “all aspects of social life and all social phenomena ultimately depend upon the development level of the productive forces and production relationships, that is, upon economic conditions.” He argued that economic conditions, which also embrace technological innovation, are the primary locomotive of military might and scientific progress. He quoted F. Engels, who said that “nothing so depends upon the economic conditions as the army and the navy. Weapons, the composition, the organisation, tactics and strategy depend primarily upon the level of production achieved at the given moment and upon the means of communication.”⁹

Voznenko goes further when discussing the impact of ideology on Soviet military strategy. Voznenko stated:

Soviet military strategy proceeds from the great and noble goals of our state expressed in building a communist society and the necessity of the armed defense of the nation against aggression. This strategy serves the interests of the Soviet people and its efforts are focused on elaborating the main questions of raising military might and the defense capability of the socialist motherland, as well as the fraternal community of socialist nations.¹⁰

⁸ N.A. Lomov, editor, *Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs, A Soviet View* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002), 3. This is an English translation carried out under the auspices of the United States Air Force. It was originally published in 1973 by the Military Publishing House of the Soviet Ministry of Defense.

⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Soch.(Works)*, vol. 20, 171. Cited in Lomov, 127.

¹⁰ Lomov, 135.

All decisions concerning the defense of the Soviet motherland had to follow from the founding tenets of the Soviet state. Contemporary military and defense policies were built upon the leading ideology of the CPSU. Despite the detente pursued by Khrushchev, ideology was still wary of capitalism and perceived imperialist states. Voznenko continued his discussion of the impact of ideology on the military policies of the Soviet Union. Suspicion remained concerning the intentions of the West. The guarantee of peace was a fundamental interest of the Soviet people; however, “as long as capitalism exists, the threat of war from the imperialist aggressors remain[ed].”¹¹

Khrushchev strongly believed that ideology was the driving force of the Soviet Union, especially a more pure Leninist version of communist ideology. Khrushchev intended to refocus his perceived ideological pillars of the Soviet state when concerned with reform of the Soviet armed forces. Lenin, on military affairs, did not dismiss Western thought, particular that of Carl von Clausewitz. Lenin, and military officers from 1917 onward, were able to show that Clausewitz’s theories were able to be integrated into Marxist-Leninist ideology. Former commander of the General Staff Academy, Colonel-General I. A. Shavrov, wrote on Clausewitz:

He, in reality, for the first time in military theory, denied the ‘eternal’ and ‘unchanging’ in military art, strove to examine the phenomenon of war in its interdependence and inter-conditionality, in its movement and development in order to postulate their laws and principles.¹²

Even as other Western theorists and specialist in academic, economic, and philosophical fields, and their writings, were taboo in the Soviet Union, Clausewitz’s ideas were studied. Lenin’s first citation of Clausewitz came in June 1915, in a work on the collapse of the Second

¹¹ Lomov, 135.

¹² I. A. Shavrov and M. I. Galkin, eds. *Metodologiya voenno-nauchnogo poznaniya* (Moscow; Voenizdat, 1977), 96.

International.¹³ Whereas Marx and Engels used citations of Clausewitz to explain wars of aggression between capitalist, imperialist states, Lenin's synthesis of Clausewitz was integral to the Bolshevik ideology of class struggle and revolution through violent means by a dedicated, professional body. For Lenin, Clausewitz provided the framework in which wars among bourgeois states were to be transformed in national, civil wars to overthrow capitalist powers. War, as a continuation of politics by other means, was able to be applied by Lenin to class struggle as well as to external threats once the Soviet Union was established.

It was out of necessity, not ideological concerns, that the Red Army of Worker's and Peasants was created in 1918. Civil war and foreign intervention required a strong, centralized force, built around the Red Guards, to defend from external and, at that time, internal threat.

Lenin identified the Red Army as a new type of military force in keeping with the state formation which the of the Soviet Republic represented. The Red Army in many ways negated the imperial military tradition, but it also negated much of the prewar socialist ideas about a citizens army, which would dispense with the services of a professional officer corps.¹⁴

While the debate over a socialist-style, territorial-based militia army did not end in 1918, nor after the Civil War, it was firmly finished by the 1950s. Khrushchev inherited strong, centralised armed forces, which were commanded by an increasingly professional corps of well-educated officers.

Lenin and Clausewitz's thoughts on war can be applied to the Khrushchev era. Whether cognizant of his own thoughts or not, how Khrushchev's use military force, and the threat of military force, to influence both domestic politics and international relations can be seen as a

¹³ Jacob W. Kipp, "Lenin and Clausewitz: The Militarization of Marxism, 1914-1921," *Military Affairs* 49, no. 4 (October 1985): 186.

¹⁴ Kipp, 187.

Clausewitzian approach. Whether when it was answering a questions posed over dinner by Anthony Eden's wife during a state visit to the United Kingdom (1956), or through nuclear bluff during the Suez crisis (1956), Khrushchev attempted to influence foreign policy and international disputes with the mere mention of the Soviet Union's technical achievements and military might.¹⁵ In Khrushchev's thinking, nuclear brinksmanship was a continuation of his policies, both foreign and domestic, by other means.

Military officers viewed the debate in a different prism. Officers argued the military might of a country created conditions where politics and diplomacy were able to function, without the necessity to resort to military power. The military was tasked with creating those conditions in "which politics was in a position to achieve the aims set for itself."¹⁶ In a reverse way, the Clausewitzian dictum was advocated to allow politics to work, without resorting to military means. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, not their actual use, was their importance. More on the differences between Khrushchev and military officers will be discussed later in this chapter.

A Comparison of Khrushchev's USSR and Eisenhower's USA

Ideological differences between the United States and the Soviet Union were central to the evolution and developments which spurred on the Cold War. Ideological percepts spilled over into the area of military doctrines in both states. The role of the Soviet military was to

¹⁵ Sergei Khrushchev, ed., *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev Vol. 3 Statesman [1953-1964]* (University Park, PA; Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 69.

¹⁶ Colonel S. Kozlov, "Nekotore voprosii na teoria strategii," *Voennaya mysl'* 11 (1954), 23.

defend the USSR against external aggressors, which had been admirably accomplished in the fight for its very survival during the Great Patriotic War. The Marxist-Leninist revolution was advanced by the political officers of the Red Army.

It was in the context of maintaining a territorial defence, while launching at Marxist-Leninist revolutionary offensive, that the Soviet Union acquired its atomic bomb in 1949. Soon after Stalin claimed that not only was nuclear war foreseeable, but it was feasible to win such a conflict. With greater technological advancements the probability of winning a nuclear exchange only increased. Officially, plenipotentiaries from both countries argued that their rival socioeconomic systems, as they competed, would only surpass one another in technological advancements. Thus, the guiding rails of the arms race were laid. Competition in armaments, in economic indicators, and culture spanned the next 45 years.

Stalin's dictum that nuclear war was winnable died with him on 5 March 1953. Under the collective leadership that emerged, nuclear war was not imminently foreseeable. Nonetheless, military officials, both in the US and USSR had to plan for nuclear eventualities. Foreshadowing Khrushchev's own position on nuclear war, the collective leadership focused on the humanistic factors of nuclear war. Khrushchev and the collective leadership strongly stated that nuclear war was not only unforeseeable in the future, but also there was no way a nuclear exchange was winnable. A nuclear exchange between the two superpowers would consume the world; it would engulf the entire globe in conflict and fallout. Across the Atlantic, Khrushchev's American counterpart, Dwight D. Eisenhower, echoed those sentiments. Eisenhower and Khrushchev owed the world restraint. The fate of the world, Communist and Western, rested in the hands of the leaders of the world's superpowers.

Parallel developments in armaments and doctrine occurred under the leaderships of Khrushchev and Eisenhower in their respective countries. Both men were intrigued and appreciated the powers of ballistic rocketry and nuclear weaponry. Rockets and missiles elevated the arms race in the ideological struggle to overcome the other state. Another factor attracting those two men to new technologies was the ability to shift focus to these new technological advancements in weaponry from more conventional forces, thereby reducing military expenditures and defence budgets. Khrushchev presumed that reductions to conventional forces would reduce expenditures on the military; however, with increased research and development costs, as well as the long development period of technologically superior missiles, costs tended to increase over the long run. Reductions to conventional armed forces were a prime concern for both Khrushchev and Eisenhower. Both men had visionary programs to raise consumer goods production and the standards of living in their respective states. With those thoughts came reductions in conventional arms, an increased reliance on strategic forces, and a visionary program to develop nuclear submarines capable of firing ballistic missiles. Khrushchev's new strategic thinking began with focusing the leadership debate within the Presidium on "where limited resources [should] be invested."¹⁷ Furthermore, what specific areas of military/technological development showed the most promise for increasing the security of the Soviet Union and its client states? The Soviet leadership could invest in long-range strategic aircraft, bombers, following the path of the United States, or they could develop a new approach to match better their own strategic needs. Technologically, the Soviet Union was far behind the United States in long-range bomber development.

¹⁷ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 224.

Under Stalin, Andrei Nikolayevich Tupolev had been ordered to design and construct strategic bombers that could reach the United States and return to Soviet territory without refueling as the Soviets did not possess in-air refueling capabilities. The problem with reaching the US mainland was in-air refueling. Soviet strategic bombers were able to reach the US, barely, but they were unable safely to return to Soviet or friendly territory without in-air refueling. Tupolev told Stalin the Soviet Union lacked the technological ability to create such an aircraft then.¹⁸ Khrushchev held Tupolev in the highest regard. Under Khrushchev's patronage, Tupolev designed civilian and military aircraft, but he never produced a bomber that could successfully threaten the United States. While Khrushchev was in power, the project to build a long-range strategic bomber was shelved. It was a dead-end road in the drive to fulfill the defensive needs of the USSR.

In fairly short order, Khrushchev answered his own questions. Focusing on rocketry and other modern technologies allowed the Soviet Union to increase its defensive preparedness, while at the same time attempting to raise the standard of living for the ordinary Soviet citizens. The costs continually to update a bomber fleet were large, whereas, missile technology was thought to be more cost-effective in the long run. In coordination, air defence systems were to be switched from intercept aircraft to antiaircraft missiles, such as those which shot down Francis Gary Powers' U-2 over Sverdlovsk on May Day 1960. Khrushchev wrote in his memoirs that, 'antiaircraft artillery had outlived its day.'¹⁹ In that fashion, the core of the defensive and offensive military armaments of the Soviet Union were to be based on ever-evolving military

¹⁸ *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Brown, Little & Co., 1974), 39.

¹⁹ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev* vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), ed. Sergei Khrushchev (Pennsylvania State University Press; University Park, PA, 2006), 472.

technologies. Khrushchev thought, ‘the number of bayonets you have is no longer decisive. The quality and strength of your missiles determine everything today.’²⁰

The United States developed a large and modern long-range bomber fleet throughout World War II and the proceeding years. By embracing developing military technologies, the US built long-range bomber squadrons, which are still a mainstay of American power projection. From April 1952, Boeing’s B-52 Stratofortress became the backbone of the US bomber fleet and Strategic Air Command (SAC).²¹ In contrast to the Soviet Union, the US had the option to deploy strategic aircraft alongside ballistic rocketry. However, in the early years of the Cold War and arms race, the US focus was on long-range, manned bombers.

Both the Soviet and American ballistic missile programs evolved from the German efforts during World War II, specifically the V-1 and V-2 program. In the waning months of the war, working before the division of Germany was complete, Allied forces scoured Germany for missile technology and scientists such as Wehner von Braun. Braun was quickly whisked to the United States, while the Soviets plundered their sectors of divided Germany for the same technology and manpower. Despite the initial influx of knowledge, the US missile program was not taken seriously until Eisenhower was elected President in 1953. In 1948, under President Truman, missile development stopped completely. By 1952, only one million dollars were being budgeted for the fledgling armament program.²² Partially explained by a general draw down from a wartime footing, the lack of spending was also an indication that Truman wasted little

²⁰ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 535.

²¹ The US Air Force’s Strategic Air Command, SAC, was founded in 1946.

²² Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 402.

money on redundant systems. In his thinking, bombers sufficed for US defence; that there was no need for missile redundancy.

In contrast to the United States, the Soviets quickly began a ballistic missile program under Stalin in the late 1940s. Sergei Korolev, Vladimir Chelomei, and Mikhail Yangel were the three central chief designers under Khrushchev competing for resources for their own ballistic missile programs. An innovative new branch of the Soviet military was created to ‘handle’ those new weapons. The Strategic Rocket Forces (*raketnye voiska strategicheskogo naznecheniia*, RVSN) was founded on 17 December 1959. It was tasked with the overall command for all ballistic missiles, with a range of over 1,000 kilometres in the Soviet arsenal.

In 1946, the development of long-range ballistic missile development was sanctioned by the Council of Ministers.²³ It was the perception that, ‘the invulnerability of missiles to existing antiaircraft weapons provided the hope that missiles could become effective weapons in the future, after their combat characteristics had been improved.’²⁴ Podvig divides the history of the RVSN into stages of development; his first stage is inclusive of the Khrushchev period, 1959-1965. In this first stage of development, missile launchers were built around the concept of group-start launch complexes - several launchers located within close proximity to one another. In this grouping, Podvig argued the survivability of a nuclear attack was not paramount as the development and deployment initially took precedence.²⁵

The 43rd Rocket Army based in the Kiev Military District and the 50th Rocket Army stationed in the Belorussian Military District were the first two units created in the RVSN. They

²³ *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 February 1995.

²⁴ Pavel Podvig, ed., *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces* (Cambridge, MA; The MIT Press, 2001), 118.

²⁵ Podvig, 123.

both went into service in 1960 with the former being taken out of service in 1996 and the latter being demobilized in 1990. Two further units went into service in 1962. The 33rd Guards Rocket Army stationed in the Siberian Military District is still in service. Stationed in the Transbaikal Military District, the 53rd Rocket Army was demobilized in 2002.²⁶ Those four units comprised the RVSN during Khrushchev's tenure.

The new branch of the Soviet military paralleled a doctrinal shift orchestrated by Khrushchev. Under Khrushchev's leadership the Soviet government stressed the importance of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons over the 'outdated' conventional forces, which had always been the mainstay of the Russian and Soviet defence structure. Troop reductions were of utmost importance. Military and economic necessity factored into those reductions to conventional forces. "Mass armies of the traditional type were no longer necessary in an age of battlefield nuclear warfare: the extensive demobilization of ground and tactical air forces was a sensible means to 'modernise' the Soviet Armed Forces with missiles and tactical nuclear weapons."²⁷

The decision to structure the Soviet Union's military forces around missile technology led to the commitment by Khrushchev to reduce the conventional forces in the military. Taubman states, "when Stalin died he left the USSR isolated in a hostile world, with a war machine it couldn't afford."²⁸ In May 1945, the war in Europe was coming to a close with the surrender of Germany; the Soviet armed forces numbered 11.5 million soldiers under arms. Postwar demobilisations decreased that figure to 5,394,038 by Stalin's death in March 1953. With the

²⁶ Povdig. See Appendix B for a comparison in the development of the RVSN and the demobilization of conventional forces.

²⁷ Matthew Evangelista, "Why Keep Such an Army? Khrushchev's Troop Reductions," Cold War International History Project Working Paper 19, December 1997, 6.

²⁸ William Taubman, introduction to *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* by Sergei Khrushchev (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), viii.

emphasis on the military-industrial complex since the First Five-Year Plan in 1928, the civilian or consumer economy suffered. Khrushchev intended to reverse the trend, shifting capital from expenditures on the large conventional army to consumer consumption and spending on nuclear and missile technologies.

Soviet citizens had long done without. Khrushchev strove to improve the standard of living and the overall health and well-being of the common Soviet citizen. He wanted to provide the country with “food, clothing, footwear, and housing, in other words everything a human being needs and the Soviet people had gone many years without.”²⁹ Where was Khrushchev going to find the money to pay for a consumer economy? Changing the military doctrine allowed funds previously tied up in military expenditures to be shifted to domestic improvements. Khrushchev wrote in his memoirs that he believed that military’s point of view to be, ‘all resources must be spent on armaments, while you yourself are left with no trousers to wear.’³⁰

The first inkling from the CPSU of a new strategic doctrine, or rather shift in defence policy, was in the early post-Stalinist years, before a clear victor in the power struggle emerged. Despite Beria’s ouster and subsequent execution, he was the first to advocate more tolerable ‘face’ to the policies carried out by the CPSU and Soviet state. Historians can argue whether that was a genuine policy of Beria, or whether it was to soften the Soviet citizenry’s image of the violent man they knew from the Terror. Upon Beria’s ouster Malenkov lifted the mantle of change.

²⁹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*, 89.

³⁰ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 531.

Military Doctrine and Strategy Debate 1953-1955

On 8 August 1953, Malenkov gave a speech to the Supreme Soviet concerning the plight of the common Soviet citizens. No longer would the consumer economy suffer for the betterment of the military-industrial complex. Ideology had not died with Stalin, nor did it diminish under Khrushchev. Ideology was the leading source of the Communist Party's legitimacy, and only the Party's understanding of that ideology, gave it the ability to lead the Soviet state. Therefore, Malenkov first discussed the leading role of ideology in the formation of policy and as the guiding principle of his thoughts. "The Communist Party and the Soviet government know where and how to lead the people, because they are guided by the scientific theory of social development, Marxism-Leninism, the banner of which has been raised so high by our great father and teacher Lenin, and the continuer of his cause, Stalin."³¹ Current developments in the Soviet Union allowed for the Party to follow ideological dogmas and change course in economic policy in the first half of the 1950s. The time had come to "speed up light industry with the aim of a more rapid improvement in the material and cultural well-being of the population."³² Malenkov called for lower investment in the military-industrial complex. He proposed tapping into the strategic reserve of hard currencies and gold to fund new investments in the civilian economy. Malenkov pledged to increase investments in agriculture and the consumer-related economy by reducing investments to the military-industrial complex. Zubok

³¹ Cited in: Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 120.

³² Naum Jasny, "The New Economic Course in the USSR," *Problems of Communism* 3, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 1954): 1.

argues that Malenkov's call was the first since 1928 to echo that shift.³³ Domestic policy was not the only area where Malenkov wished to chart a new policy course. In the days and weeks after Stalin's death, Malenkov spoke on the need for a new course in Soviet foreign policy. Peace was to be the basis of a new forward-thinking foreign policy emanating from the Kremlin.

Peace was to be pursued with the West, as relations were strengthened between the communist bloc: the USSR, China, Korea, and the fraternal socialist countries of Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union under Malenkov could promote "a policy of international cooperation and development of business relations with all countries, a policy based on the Lenin-Stalin premise of the possibility of the prolonged coexistence and peaceful competition of two different systems, capitalist and socialist."³⁴ War was to be despised by the peoples of the world. Days later Malenkov, speaking before the Supreme Soviet, articulated those sentiments. Discussing the ongoing Korean conflict, Malenkov told the legislature that there were no problems between nations, yes even between the USSR and USA, which could not be solved through peaceful means. War should always be a policy of last resort. Malenkov, and eventually Khrushchev, became the standard bearers of the policy of peaceful coexistence.³⁵

Interviewed in January 1955, shortly before his removal, Malenkov stressed international cooperation on nuclear weapons. He hoped for peaceful coexistence with the West, specifically mentioning the USA. International controls over nuclear weapons were possible; however, all nuclear states must agree to an "unconditional ban of nuclear weapons." The Big Four (the victorious powers of WWII: France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United

³³ Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire, The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 96.

³⁴ "Funeral Orations by Malenkov, Beria, Molotov," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 5, no.7, 1953: 7-8.

³⁵ "Speech by Malenkov, 16 March 1953," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 5, no. 8, 1953: 5.

States) was an avenue Malenkov saw to solve such major international questions. He also pushed for the eventual formation of personal and cultural links between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the West. Only through understanding, Malenkov believed, could progress be made in international relations.³⁶

Malenkov's policy initiatives were used against him by those in the Party who wished to supersede him as leader. Could the move against Malenkov been perceived as a move by the CPSU to re-impose control over the governmental bureaucracy? Malenkov had seen Stalin use the government bureaucracy to wield power before and after the war. However, it was Khrushchev who better understood the political power that was supreme within the Party itself. Khrushchev used the power and prestige of the Party, understanding that true power rested in the leaders of the Party. Moving against Malenkov is an illustration of a move by Khrushchev in favor of Party control over the bureaucracy of the Soviet government. Also, one can see a move by Khrushchev to replace Malenkov and followers in the government with Khrushchev's own supporters. Khrushchev not only practiced the selection of mediocracy over meritocracy in the armed forces but also within other institutions of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev was the primary antagonist against Malenkov. However, Khrushchev knew he could count on the support of the military as those policies expounded by Malenkov challenged the dogmatic strictures they had come to rely on. Namely, the military, and the military-industrial complex, were to be the foundation of the economy and first to receive budgetary monies. To suggest reductions in spending was an outrage. Money for the consumer economy was to be found elsewhere.

³⁶ *Izvestiya*, 1 January 1955, p. 1.

The military response to Malenkov's policies was not spontaneous. Guided by the Khrushchev faction within the Party, the military successfully waged a public campaign against Malenkov and his policies. Throughout the next 11 years a recurring pattern developed in civil-military relations. The military would come to support a specific policy only insofar as its institutional interests and status in the state hierarchy were not compromised. Malenkov's removal was the first such occurrence of the phenomenon.

Newspaper articles, speeches at major functions and holidays gatherings, and members of the military who spoke out publicly against Malenkov during the Central Committee Plenum were all used in the removal of Malenkov. Kliment Voroshilov, serving in his capacity as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, opened the Party meeting of that body on 8 February 1955 with discussions on the future of Malenkov. Khrushchev was given the floor to provide that background to what had already been decided by the CC CPSU plenum of 31 January. Presenting the Supreme Soviet with a *fait accompli*, he told the that body that the following was adopted unanimously by the Central Committee:

having heard the report of Com. Khrushchev about Com. Malenkov and completely approving the proposal of the CC Presidium on the issue, the CPSU CC Plenum thinks that Com. Malenkov is not providing the proper fulfillment of the responsibilities of Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. Not having the necessary knowledge and experience in administrative work nor experience with the work of local Soviet organs, Com. Malenkov organises the work of the Council of Ministers poorly and does not ensure the thorough and timely preparation of questions for meetings of the Council of Ministers.³⁷

The indictment against him castigated Malenkov for his ideological deviations, words reminiscent of the debates from the 1920s and 1930s. Those ideological attacks focused on his

³⁷ "[Uncorrected] Transcript of a meeting of the Party group of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955," Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 285, List 1-34, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.

speech to the Supreme Soviet two years earlier after Stalin's death. "Comrade Malenkov made theoretically incorrect and politically harmful contrast between the growth rate of heavy industry and the growth rate of the light and food industries."³⁸

Not only were his views on foreign policy a deviation from Party dogma, but his views on foreign and defence policies of the Soviet Union only made Western action bolder. Weakness was perceived due to Malenkov's stated views. His views would prostrate the defence of the Soviet Union.

The dissemination of such views not only does not support the mobilisation of public opinion to actively struggle against the criminal designs of the imperialists to unleash a nuclear war but, quite the contrary, is capable of engendering inaction in peoples' efforts to disrupt the plans of the aggressors, which is to the advantage of the imperialist inciters of a new world war who are counting on intimidating people with atomic blackmail.³⁹

How ironic that Khrushchev and his supporters in the Party would find fault with atomic intimidation, which became a keystone in Khrushchev's foreign policy adventures in subsequent years.

Moving on to specific military aspects of Malenkov's failed understanding of ideology and the Soviet state, Khrushchev attacked his policy concerning the inevitability of war. Khrushchev attacked Malenkov for asserting the threat to the destruction of civilisation with the advent of the hydrogen bomb.

We have always raised the question such that if war begins, then victory will be ours, that war will not lead to the end of civilisation but to the end of capitalism,

³⁸ "[Uncorrected] Transcript of a meeting of the Party group of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955," Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 285, List 1-34, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.

³⁹ "[Uncorrected] Transcript of a meeting of the Party group of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955," Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 285, List 1-34, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.

to an expansion of our borders, and to the expansion and an affirmation of our teachings, teachings created by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.⁴⁰

Framed as an ideological debate, Khrushchev attacked Malenkov for the exact policies, and in some instances, phrases, that he would shortly adopt. Discrediting Malenkov's policies questioned whether the determined interest of the Soviet heavy industries and military technological progression continued to trump the growing need for investment in the civilian economy. Khrushchev 'reassured' his audience at the Supreme Soviet that the CC, with the removal of Malenkov, maintained the policy of a continued focus on heavy industry. "The absolute main thing for us is strengthening the defence capacity of the country."⁴¹ The military leaders could hardly contain themselves; two years of decreased military spending were to be halted. Their support of Khrushchev in news articles and speeches had returned dividends. Weaponry procurement was to continue unabated.

After listening to the prolonged diatribe against him, Malenkov took the floor and professed his sincere regret for his antithetical views. Remorseful toward his removal, he was glad to be shown the error of his ways and how to improve his understanding of ideology. Acknowledging "gross mistakes," Malenkov accepted responsibility and was allowed to remain a member of the Presidium.⁴²

⁴⁰ "[Uncorrected] Transcript of a meeting of the Party group of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955," Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 285, List 1-34, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.

⁴¹ "[Uncorrected] Transcript of a meeting of the Party group of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955," Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 285, List 1-34, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.

⁴² "[Uncorrected] Transcript of a meeting of the Party group of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 8 February 1955," Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 285, List 1-34, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.

Marshal N.A. Bulganin was elevated to the post vacated by Malenkov. Marshal G.K. Zhukov was named Minister of Defence of the Soviet Union. Although there was no love lost between these men (Zhukov viewed Bulganin as nothing more than a political stooge within the military ranks), the military now had two very strong supporters within the ministries of government. More will be discussed in the next chapter on the role Marshal Zhukov played in civil-military relations while in charge of the Ministry of Defence.

However, one offshoot of the military's support of Khrushchev against Malenkov was an open debate on military strategy. An open debate such as that had not been seen since the Civil War between those who favoured a centralised military versus those who supported a militia-style system, between supporter of Mikhail Frunze and Leon Trotsky. Certainly no strategic debate had occurred under Stalin, even during the best of times through the Great Patriotic War.

Before we enter into the debate which played out in newspapers, academic journals, and within the Kremlin, one must understand the terminology associated with this debate.

Terminology associated with the debate, which began in the 1950s, generally meant one thing to Western armies and academia, and occupies another meaning within the Soviet context.

"Military affairs, and military theory in particular, occup[ied] a much different position in the Soviet Union than in the [West]."⁴³ Ideology focused all definitions around the theories of socialism and communism. According to Lenin, theory was a guide followed by military for action. Theory informed the military on how to mobilize, train, and fight a military conflict. By the 1950s a shift occurred in Soviet thought on military strategy, doctrine, and theory. Early Soviet military theorists were products of Imperial Russian military academies and the Imperial

⁴³ Harriet F. Scott and William F. Scott, editors, *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), 1.

General Staff. The theorist and practitioners of the 1950s were predominately products of the Civil War and proved their mettle during the Great Patriotic War.

Military doctrine was the political policy of the Party and government in the military sphere. It was an expression of military policies of the state. Stated otherwise it was the directive handed down by the state on any political or military strategy.⁴⁴ Marshal of the Soviet Union A.A. Grechko, stated that military doctrine was “an officially accepted system of views in a given state and in its armed forces on the nature of war and methods of conducting it and on preparations of the country and the army for war.” Using Grechko’s definition, doctrine answered these questions:

- What enemy?
- What is the nature of the war? What are the goals and missions?
- What forces are needed to complete those goals and missions?
- How are preparations for war to be implemented?
- What methods must be used to wage war?⁴⁵

Thus, using both Western and Soviet definitions, the military doctrine of the Soviet state was proclaimed by the CPSU and the Soviet state to the Soviet armed forces. Military doctrine answered those questions posed by Marshal Grechko; however, those answers will be driven by ideological considerations.

Soviet theorists focused their concern for doctrine on the next war. Doctrine provided guideposts for the formulations of strategy and weapons systems development. Thus, doctrine possibly preceded actual military capabilities by several years. Scott and Scott focused on the

⁴⁴ S.N. Kozlov, editor, *Spravochnik ofitsera* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971), 75.

⁴⁵ A.A. Grechko, *Vorruzheniie silii sovetskogo gosudarstva*, 2nd edition (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1975), 340.

doctrine of the 1960s as “clearly point[ing] the way for the buildup of strategic nuclear forces,” which occurred in the next decades of the Cold War.⁴⁶

Central to the academicians debate on doctrine was military science. In the Soviet sense it was focused on the broad study of military affairs. It centered on a unified system of knowledge about the preparations for and the waging of war. Under military science there were subsections which were to be studied: the character of war, the laws of war, how to prepare the country and armed forces for war, and the exact methods of waging war. The most important aspect of Soviet military science was the theory of military art. What are the exact methods and forms of armed combat? Strategy, operational art, and tactics are the integral components of military art. Strategy was the centralized focus of war; to be specific, would a country fight a defensive or an offensive war? Operational art delved into smaller areas of war. Operational art was concerned with a specific arena of a war - a battle or front. Further into this equation were tactics. Tactics were engaged at the level of small unit maneuvers and how each unit had assigned tasks to a battle. When the tactics of all the units came together, one has the operational art!

Understanding the definitions above is key to the comprehension of the next sections in the debate on military affairs in the Khrushchev era. From the debates which occurred around the time of the removal of Malenkov, to the greater debate on the future of war and military doctrine, Khrushchev divided the military leadership. Some aligned with him in supporting a greater reliance and preeminent position on nuclear weapons, while others viewed that as an unbalanced, skewed doctrinal policy for the military. That debate began in the months following

⁴⁶ Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics*, 9.

Stalin's death. The first open debate on military doctrine quickly attacked Stalin's control over it.

In a March 1946 interview with Alexander Werth, Stalin stated that he did "not believe the atomic bomb to be as serious a force as certain politicians are inclined to regard. Atomic bombs are intended to intimidate the weak-nerved, but they cannot decide about the outcome of the war, since such bombs are by no means sufficient for this purpose!" Stalin's argument to Werth was armies win wars!⁴⁷ From 1948 to Khrushchev's first conventional arms reductions in 1955, the size of the Soviet armed forces and those of the Eastern bloc countries doubled.⁴⁸

Stalin believed that military science and doctrine were guided by what he coined 'permanent operating factors.' Those included: the dominance of the Soviet system, weapons development, intensive training and readiness programs (including ideological indoctrination), the support of national defence by the national economy and society, and the strong leadership of the CPSU. Within months of Stalin's death, military publications printed revisions to that thinking. The 'permanent operating factors' were no longer the guiding principles of Soviet military thought.

Malenkov publicly supported policies, which were one-hundred and eighty degrees opposite that of the interests the military supported. In the 1960s, Kolkowicz argued that the Soviet military emerged onto the political arena with the debated between Khrushchev and Malenkov. Kolkowicz believed: "by throwing their support to the factions in the Party that publicly supported their interests, the military revealed, for the first time in decades, that it could

⁴⁷ Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 312.

⁴⁸ Roberts, 312.

be a crucial factor in the Soviet state in times of internal division and collective rule.”⁴⁹ As stated above, Conquest wrote that only the Soviet army was capable of matching the leadership and organisation of the CPSU, and thus had the ability to influence the policies of the CPSU.

While Kolkowicz’s argument is valid, it is flawed. The military did support the faction within the inter-party division that supported their professional interests. However, without Malenkov’s views, and Khrushchev’s rebuttal of that, the military would have remained sidelined in the debate. Malenkov’s Supreme Soviet speech in 1953 was quickly rebutted by the military. In October 1953, Colonel I.N. Nenakhov published the reasons Malenkov’s policies hindered the future defence and stature of the Soviet Union. Weak and reeling from the shift to a consumer economy model, the Soviet Union would be vulnerable to an attack from the West. Only vigilance against Western aggression would hinder imperialist action against the USSR.⁵⁰ Nenakhov acted as the public voice of the military brass. Who could question the military on their intentions? Did the military support for Khrushchev over Malenkov in the early post-Stalinist leadership struggle illustrate a greater political awareness on part of the military’s brass? Illustrated below is another viewpoint. Malenkov was not a political enemy of the military. He did argue for a shift away from a military footing of the economy. Malenkov attacked the very institutional interests of the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff, and the entire armed forces of the USSR. In years to come, the military faced those very same attacks from Khrushchev as well. Once a perceived encroachment was felt by the military leadership, their support of Khrushchev and his policies waned. Partly these conflicts boiled down to perceptions of rights

⁴⁹ Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 108.

⁵⁰ Colonel I.N. Nenakhov, [Unknown title], *Voennaya mysl’* 10 (October 1953).

and purview over military policies. Where did the military feel the CPSU had overstepped the boundaries dividing military and Party purviews? Military doctrine was an area of military professionalism. As Khrushchev's power in the Party grew in the 1950s, his perceived knowledge of doctrine increased. Whether wholly based on his military career, or his position within the government and Party, Khrushchev used both to comment on military subjects, from weapons systems to tactics. As he voiced opinions on various aspects of doctrine, the military divided over support for and skepticism toward such opinions.

From the onset of the post-Stalinist era, the military actively, and publicly, attacked the Stalinist hold on strategic thinking and military doctrine. General-Major N.A. Talenskii, former editor of *Krasnaya zvezda* and in 1953 editor of *Voennaya mysl'* (Military Thought), was the first to broach the topic of Stalin's control of doctrine. According to Talenskii, the 'basic law of armed conflict is primarily the law of victory.' Thus, the political goal of armed conflict is achieved only through victory. That law permeated societies and was universal. It applied to socialist and capitalist societies.⁵¹

Talenskii did not exactly attack Stalin's 'permanent operating factors'. "Victory in modern war is achieved by the decisive defeat of the enemy during armed conflict by successive strikes increasing in force, on the basis of superiority in permanent operating factors, which decide the fate of war, and on the base of the comprehensive use of the economic, moral-political, and military possibilities in their unity and interaction."⁵² The factors alone did not lead to victory in armed conflict; however, those factors coupled with societal, economic, and

⁵¹ N.A. Talenskii, "Po voprosy o kharaktere zakonov voennoi nauki" (On the Question of the Character of the Laws of Military Science), *Voennaya Mysl'* (Military Thought) no. 9, (September 1953). *Voennaya Mysl'* was the primary organ of military leadership. It had a limited publication and only disseminated to those within the Ministry of Defence and General Staff hierarchy.

⁵² N.A. Talenskii, "Po voprosy o kharaktere zakonov voennoi nauki."

technological developments would lead to victory in modern warfare. Surprise in modern war was an important determinant of victory. Preemption should be considered a national policy of defence in modern war if one reads into Talenskii. Stalin's 'permanent operating factors' alone would not win a war; nonetheless, preemptive assaults built around those factors would lead to victory. Nowhere in his article did Talenskii discuss the impact of nuclear weapons on strategic thinking and military science. How would nuclear weapons change the ways Soviet strategists think on war? Talenskii did not discuss how nuclear weapons might have an impact on modern warfare. Talenskii's historical importance rests on being one of the first officers openly, and in print, to question not only Stalin's tightly held control on military thought, but also on Stalin's interpretations of strategy and doctrine.

Talenskii's article was not well-received in all military circles. It openly challenged the Stalinist hold on thought; thus it challenged the Party's control of doctrine. Within a year of its publication, Talenskii was removed from his editorial position at *Voennaya mysl'* and given a post at the Institute of History in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Marshal Vasilevskii, without mentioning his name, castigated Talenskii in *Krasnaya zvezda*. Writing the 'outcome of a war is determined not by transitory factors,' which Talenskii discussed, 'but by permanent operating factors,'⁵³ Vasilevskii showed he was mired in traditional thought. He was of another generation. Not a local commander at the Front during World War II, but a member of *Stavka*, he was unwilling to shift thought. With some success, Khrushchev was able to play these two groups, those who served at the Front and those with central command in Moscow, off against one another illustrating his use of divide and rule tactics. Those Front commanders whom

⁵³ *Krasnaya zvezda*, 7 May 1954.

Khrushchev fought with, especially at Stalingrad, became integral to his new thinking on military doctrine. The so-called Stalingrad Group owed their position to him; nonetheless, by the 1960s they became fragmented themselves. Some remained loyal to Khrushchev whereas others realized his infringements on military professionalism and skewed views on strategy might lead to a weakened defense posture of the Soviet Union.

While most senior officers disagreed with Talenskii's view on modern warfare there was importance to the debate. The debate itself mattered. It illustrated the changes within the Soviet Union since Stalin's death. Openness was welcome in some areas of thought. The fact that there was an open debate occurring in the highest echelons of the military leadership was evidence enough that changes had occurred since Stalin's death. It took a year, but in time, even Marshal Vasilevskii changed course. Writing in *Izvestiya*, Vasilevskii came out in favour of Talenskii and Rotmistrov's ideas, as are discussed below, on the importance of surprise in modern war.⁵⁴

In the 1980s, Scott and Scott argued that "personal, unofficial, or conflicting views on basic military issues simply are not permitted in the highly controlled and censored Soviet press, military or otherwise, unless there is a reason."⁵⁵ While that may be aptly applied to the Soviet Union in the 1980s, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was a greater sense of openness that military officers operated. While the military press was used for specific reasons, such as to censure Malenkov, it was also openly used by the military against the perceived intrusions by Khrushchev into their perceived areas of expertise, which were not to be encroached upon.

Although Talenskii's view was criticised early on, over time it was accepted as a fundamental shift in strategic thought. Throughout the 1950s, what was called a "revolution" in

⁵⁴ *Izvestiya*, 8 May 1955.

⁵⁵ Scott and Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR*, xv.

military affairs occurred within the Soviet Union. Khrushchev believed revolutions in military affairs occurred with brilliant technological breakthroughs. Gunpowder facilitated the last revolution; nuclear weapons would facilitate the modern revolution in military affairs. The military press, and military officers, published extensively on the subject. A seminal article was written by Marshal of the Armoured Forces Pavel Rotmistrov, who also held a Doctorate of Military Sciences. From 1948 to 1958 Rotmistrov was deputy head of academic department at the General Staff Academy; until 1964 he headed the Malinovskii Tank Academy.

Marshal Rotmistrov's writings focused on the next armed conflict because since the end of World War II 'serious quantitative and qualitative changes have occurred in military affairs. Lessons were studied from the last war. While those lessons were folded into doctrine, atomic weapons changed the face of warfare.'⁵⁶ According to Rotmistrov, 'the tremendous development of the productive forces, the unprecedented progress of science and technology in the postwar period, and particularly the harnessing of atomic energy could not but influence military art.'⁵⁷ Those changes were incorporated into changing military doctrine. The overarching influence of technological developments was not overestimated by Rotmistrov.

During World War II, tanks and aviation, which were rapidly developed after their appearances in World War I, began to influence not only tactic but operational art directly. The case is quite different with atomic weapons, which possess vast destructive powers, and with their carriers: intercontinental ballistic missiles; long-range aviation; surface vessels and submarines armed with rockets which make it possible to deliver crushing attacks on objectives hundreds and thousands of kilometers away; rockets for operational-tactical purposes; and atomic artillery.

⁵⁶ P.A. Rotmistrov, "Na sovremennoe sovetskoe voennoe mycli i ii kharakternii cherti," (On Modern Soviet Military Thought and Its Characteristic Features), *Voennaya mysl'* no. 2 (February 1958).

⁵⁷ Rotmistrov, "Na sovremennoe sovetskoe voennoe mycli i ii kharakternii cherti."

These types of combat equipment influence strategy, operational art, and tactics simultaneously.⁵⁸

Thus, whereas aviation was limited in scope, nuclear weapons touched on all aspects of fighting a future war. Rotmistrov quoted Khrushchev in his article. In an interview with the Hearst newspapers, Khrushchev stated just what effect nuclear weapons might have on the next war. No continent will be untouched by the next war. That was the focus of Rotmistrov's article.

Rotmistrov further focused on the simultaneous action across a broad front. Normal military targets, along with strategic reserves and stockpiles, became possible targets. Offensive maneuvers in depth, the deep attack, pincer movements behind enemy lines to envelope and cut off large areas of the battlefield, which had been part of Soviet strategy since Tukhachevskii, became even more important with the development of nuclear weapons. Rotmistrov facilitated a doctrinal debate, which in 1955 was ahead of its time. By the 1960s, military theorists were advocating the use of conventional forces alongside those of strategic and tactical forces. However, Rotmistrov was the first to advocate that doctrine. Nuclear weapons should be used alongside 'attacks by large armoured groups and the use of tactical and operational airborne landings.'⁵⁹ Only conventional forces had the capability to hold territory and advance forward on the battlefield. That argument was taboo in the mind of Khrushchev. Khrushchev wrote he could hardly 'imagine how tanks could survive in contemporary warfare.'⁶⁰ Conventional weapons were to be sidelined and predominately replaced by nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems. Even in retirement Khrushchev argued: 'conventional weapons are

⁵⁸ Rotmistrov, "Na sovremennoe sovetskoe voennoe mysl' i ee kharakternykh cherty."

⁵⁹ Rotmistrov, "Na sovremennoe sovetskoe voennoe mysl' i ee kharakternykh cherty."

⁶⁰ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 478.

not the decisive factor in determining basic policy when we're talking, not about local conflict, but worldwide confrontation. Today everything depends on skill in handling thermonuclear weapons.'⁶¹ Khrushchev argued that conventional weapons should be reduced to a level that allowed for 'reasonable sufficiency [*razumnaya dostatochnost*']'.⁶² Those ideas were central to the debate between Khrushchev and the military throughout the 1960s.

Central to Khrushchev's decision to reduce conventional forces was a new line of thinking within the leadership of the CPSU. Once Khrushchev had consolidated power, with the removal of Beria and Malenkov, he realized that the 'nuclear standoff made the Leninist-Marxist tenets about the inevitability of another global war obsolete.'⁶³ Peaceful coexistence with the West, specifically with the United States, was possible. The exact policy initiatives favoured by Malenkov, which led to his removal, were not espoused by Khrushchev. Stalin's implications that war was inevitable was fearful in a nuclear world. Any superpower conflict would quickly expand into a worldwide nuclear exchange. Peaceful coexistence only accounted for part of Khrushchev's new thinking. The other aspect was that the 'socialist world,' led by Moscow, had been growing stronger, not only in East-Central Europe but in Asia as well. Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party were victorious on the Chinese mainland. Thus, a larger and stronger socialist camp made war less inevitable.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 523.

⁶² *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 537.

⁶³ Vladislav Zubok and Hope Harrison, "The Nuclear Education of Nikita Khrushchev," in *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb* ed. John Lewis Gaddis (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 145.

⁶⁴ On the other hand, Mao and the Chinese Communists did not dispute that the 'socialist world' had indeed grown stronger but concluded that this made the imperialist-capitalist world more desperate and that war with the West was more likely.

Stalin had pushed for a conventional arms buildup that would create a conventional arms race with the United States. John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under President Eisenhower, feared such a challenge because, on the balance of conventional forces, the US could not compete with the USSR. He feared bankrupting the US. Khrushchev's reductions of the armed forces began in earnest in 1955-57, when he reduced the size of the military by almost 1.8 million troops. Another 300,000 were demobilised in January 1958 (see Appendix B for a table of conventional force reductions).⁶⁵ Production of long-range bombers was halted. Factories were re-fitted to produce passenger planes or ballistic missiles. Nuclear weapons and missiles would provide the defensive capabilities necessary to the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. He told his critics:

You realize things have changed since the time of Suvorov. Modern soldiers no longer live by the motto 'a bullet is a fool, but a bayonet is a sure friend.' Battles are no longer won with bayonets, or bullets for that matter. Even Suvorov used to say that a better-trained and better-armed force can defeat an enemy that outnumbers it. In his day, armies met with sword and cannon. With the invention of the machine gun, the nature of warfare changed. A few machine-gunners could now mow down huge numbers of infantry men like a farmer with a scythe. Now, in the age of missiles and nuclear bombs, the number of divisions on one side or the other has practically no effect on the outcome of the battle. A hydrogen bomb can turn whole divisions into so much cooked meat. One bomb has an enormous radius of destruction.⁶⁶

As the Soviet Union developed greater knowledge of advanced military technology, namely ballistic rocketry and nuclear weapons, conventional forces became outdated.

Following Khrushchev's Secret Speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, even greater public debate occurred over the future of warfare. Writing on the Marxist-Leninist ideological implications in war and the army, P.A Chuvikov asserted that ideology guided

⁶⁵ William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003), 379.

⁶⁶ *Khrushchev Remembers, The Last Testament*, 261.

military strategy. "Soviet military strategy contemplates first of all the correct preparation and utilization in time of combat actions of all reserves for the achievement of military victory."⁶⁷

Even though Stalinist thought suffered its greatest assault at the Twentieth Congress, Chuvikov still asserted that the 'permanent operating factors' were valid nonetheless. He did give credence to those factors according to Lenin rather than Stalin. Chuvikov attacked Stalin's cult of personality and its negative effect on the 'permanent operating factors.' Stalin's cult of personality hindered original thought, particularly in military thought and technological developments.

Chuvikov went on to quote from Marshal Zhukov's speech to the Twentieth Congress.

"In building up the Soviet Armed Forces," Zhukov stated:

We proceed from the fact that the methods and forms of future war will be different from all past wars in many ways. Future war, if unleashed, will be characterised by the mass use of air forces, various rocket weapons and various means of mass destruction such as atomic, thermonuclear, chemical, and bacteriological weapons. However, we proceed from the fact that the latest weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, do not reduce the decisive role of ground armies, navies, and aviation. Without strong ground forces, without strategic, long-range, and frontal aviation, and a modern naval fleet, without well-organised cooperation between them, modern war cannot be waged.⁶⁸

His Minister of Defence still advocated the use of conventional forces in future wars.

Khrushchev was against any future involvement in wars of large, massed groups of conventional forces. By 1956, Khrushchev was already an advocate of nuclear weapons serving as the dominant weapons of Soviet military capabilities. It was during the Twentieth Congress that

⁶⁷ P.A. Chuvikov, *Marxism-Leninism o voyne i armii* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1956), 138-159. Cited in Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1982), 133.

⁶⁸ Chuvikov, 143.

Zhukov was made a candidate member of the CPSU CC Presidium. Within a year and a half he would be removed from all Party and military positions he held.

At the Twentieth Party Congress military officers were given membership in the CPSU CC. From the Stalingrad Group, Marshals Konev, Malinovskii, and Moskalenko were made full CC members; outside of the Group, Marshals Sokolovskii and Vasilevskii were made full members. Those officers elevated to candidate members of the CC were predominately members of the Stalingrad Group: Marshal Bagramyan, Marshal Biryuzov, Marshal Chuikov, Marshal Yeremenko, General of the Army Garbatov, Marshal Grechko, Marshal of Artillery Nedelin, General of the Army Luchinskii, and Marshal of Aviation Zhigarev. The old war horses Marshals Budenny and Timoshenko, along with Admiral Gorshkov, were also made candidate members of the CC. Twenty members of the CC chosen at the 20th Party Congress were military officers, or 7.8 percent of the total CC membership. That percentage increased to 9.5 percent at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961. However, the highest percentage of military officers as members of the CC was 11 percent in 1952.⁶⁹

Grechko lauded Zhukov's removal and noted the hinderance the former Minister of Defence had on civil-military relations. Zhukov's role in civil-military relations will be discussed further in the next chapter. However, a brief discussion on his ouster and civil-military relations in relation to the rise of the Stalingrad group is necessary here. Grechko hailed the October 1957 Plenum as "a decisive event in the life of the Party, the country, and the Soviet armed forces [which]...launched a significant new stage in the development of the Soviet armed forces."⁷⁰ The April 1958 Statute on Military Council stressed the importance and size of

⁶⁹ Skilling and Griffiths, 168.

⁷⁰ Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, 136.

military councils. More authority was given to regional military councils, which were increased in size to include local party leaders. A 1958 GPU (Main Political Administration) memorandum gave greater authority over Party activities within the military, that authority was to become more centralised too. A year after Zhukov's removal saw the introduction of the Statute on the Political Organs in the Soviet Army and Navy. The Statute stated that all activities of political organs, including those concerned with military training were the sole purview of political workers. More time was to be set aside strictly for political education.⁷¹

Despite Zhukov's removal from his military and Party posts, the military never fully acquiesced in Khrushchev's desire for complete Party control over doctrine or military thought on strategy. Reimposed quickly after Zhukov's removal, Party controls over the military were relaxed within the next year. In *Krasnaya zvezda*, Malinovskii supported the military over strict Party controls. There was a need for the return to *edinonachalie*; Malinovskii argued in an article he wrote insisting that political workers must support the military commanders of their unit.⁷² It was argued *edinonachalie* allowed for the commanding military officer to have greater control over their subordinates and soldiers under them. As *edinonachalie* was re-instituted, political officers no longer had to sign off on military commanders orders.

Khrushchev Last Push to Reduce Conventional Forces: From the January 1960 Speech to the Supreme Soviet to 1964

⁷¹ Colonel S.M. Borzunov, *Resheniya oktyabrskogo plenuma TsK KPSS v deistvii* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1959).

⁷² *Krasnaya zvezda*, 1 November 1958.

Khrushchev traveled to the United States on an official visit in 1959. Khrushchev and Eisenhower engaged in official talks at Camp David. Disarmament was the priority of their discussions. Khrushchev felt that Eisenhower was eager to reach an agreement, and both thought that nuclear disarmament could possibly eliminate the inevitability of war.⁷³ The problem was how to reach a compromise. Khrushchev put forth the idea of removing all troops from foreign territories. He argued throughout the 1950s that the United States had encircled the USSR with hostile military bases. Eisenhower was not prepared to discuss that idea; any discussion of US troop movement in Europe, or withdrawals, had to be discussed with the NATO allies first. He was ready to float the idea of a nuclear test ban agreement and an end to the production of nuclear weapons. He again argued the idea of an Open Skies program for verification of these two ideas. Eisenhower's ideas on Open Skies had been first brought to the Four Powers summit meeting in Geneva (July 1955). Eisenhower still understood that such capability of the overflight of US territory by Soviet long-range aviation was possible in 1959. The proposal was again rejected by Khrushchev. No substantial agreement on disarmament was reached at Camp David.

While at Camp David, Khrushchev asked the President how he made decisions on military expenditures. Both men agreed that the control of spending was a problem for their respective nations. Eisenhower told Khrushchev that his military leaders would come to him asking for monies for military programs and weapons systems. If the funding was denied, the military brass returned advising that the Soviet Union was developing those very systems and spending monies on those very programs. The military successfully argued the Soviet Union

⁷³ Khrushchev, *The Last Testament*, 410.

was advancing and even surpassing the US in military knowledge and capabilities. At that point, Eisenhower would have no choice but to give in and approve the expenditures.⁷⁴ Khrushchev echoed that very scenario back to Eisenhower. Soviet military leaders argued in the same fashion for their spending concerns. He told the President how his General Staff came to him arguing that without funds, the security of the Soviet Union would be compromised; the United States would surpass them in the arms race. Khrushchev elaborated on this subject in his memoirs.

If the military men aren't kept under control, if they're allowed to charge off in whatever direction they please, they'll drive our country into a budgetary grave. They always have to be reined in, and they should not be allowed to pull the wool over the government's eyes in order to get what they want. They try to frighten the government with reports of the enemy's strength.⁷⁵

Khrushchev was soft in one area. He was highly resistant to military procurement requests, but he could not resist high- technology weaponry, such as ballistic missiles.⁷⁶ Both men agreed that was wasteful spending and agreed that some sort of deal should be made to end superfluous, wasteful spending. However, no such agreement was reached under their leadership.

Both the US and Soviet delegations confirmed that nothing of substance had been agreed on at Camp David. Eisenhower and Khrushchev offered a joint statement, which was noncommittal:

Chairman Khrushchev and the President have agreed that these discussions have been useful in clarifying each other's positions on a number of subjects. The talks were not undertaken to negotiate issues. It is hoped, however, that their exchange

⁷⁴ *Khrushchev Remembers*, 519.

⁷⁵ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 453.

⁷⁶ William Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 93.

of views will contribute to a better understanding of the motives and position of each and thus to the achievement of a just and lasting peace.⁷⁷

That statement answered no questions. No mention of disarmament whatsoever or cooperation in ending the arms race was made. It was as vague as possible so as not to commit them to any policy formulations.

In the months following his trip to the United States, Khrushchev scripted a speech delivered before the Supreme Soviet plenum in January 1960. In that speech, Khrushchev laid out even deeper reductions to the conventional military forces, deeper cuts to defence budgets, but in doing so ignited a debate on the future of warfare and the military strategy of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev's speech outlined the positions of Soviet strategy, defining a new military doctrine, which was based on the decisiveness of nuclear weapons in armed conflict.⁷⁸ In his memoirs he remembered 1960 by writing, 'the correct choice for us today is missiles, nuclear weapons, and a submarine fleet. Our approach toward other means of waging war must be very restrained, and we have to think very deeply to justify expenditures on other things.'⁷⁹ He went further writing, 'above all, the size of the army must be reduced without delay, along with conventional weapons, while maintaining our powerful arsenal of nuclear weapons.'⁸⁰

Khrushchev, even in retirement, pushed to show his beliefs that conventional forces were antiquated tools of war not suitable for modern, possible nuclear warfare.

⁷⁷ Memorandum for Brig. General A.J. Goodpaster from John A. Calhoun, Director Executive Secretariat of State Department, 6 October 1959, Box 9, International Trips and Meetings Series, White House Office: Office of the Staff Secretary, DDE Library, Abilene, KS.

⁷⁸ Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *Soviet Military Doctrine*, 29.

⁷⁹ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 516.

⁸⁰ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer (1945-1964), 535-536.

Building what he had already stated at both the Twentieth and Twenty-first Party Congresses, Khrushchev continued to stress that war was no longer inevitable. Achievements by Soviet industry had provided the nation with the deterrent power to rebuke the US and its NATO allies. Khrushchev began with:

the Party, the Government, and the entire Soviet people give their warm thanks to the scientists, engineers, technicians, and workers to whose knowledge and effort we owe great achievements in developing atomic and hydrogen weapons, rockets, and all other means that have made it possible to raise the defence potential of our country to so high a level, which in turn enables us now to undertake a further reduction of the armed forces.⁸¹

A new military doctrine, built on the pillars of nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems, was going to allow for those reductions. The Strategic Rocket Force, centered on ballistic missiles, was to become the primary arm of the Soviet military negating the former importance of naval and air forces. Khrushchev reiterated that since 1955, “the numerical strength of the armed forces in our country has been reduced by a third, but the firepower has increased many times over.”⁸²

Firepower alone would not win the next war. Nuclear weapons had changed the face of war. Khrushchev told the Supreme Soviet that the sheer territorial size of the USSR allowed the country to prevail in future nuclear engagements. All countries would suffer, but the USSR was able to absorb an attack and still have second-strike capabilities.

Khrushchev advocated a new military doctrine based solely on nuclear and strategic weapons. Conventional battlefield weapons were outdated and irrelevant in the nuclear age. “In our time, a country’s defence capacity is not determined by the number of men under arms, or

⁸¹ N.S. Khrushchev, *On Peaceful Coexistence* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1961), 148-151. See also: *O vneshnei politike sovetskogo souyza, 1960 g.* Tom. 1 (Moscow; Gospolitizdat, 1961)

⁸² N.S. Khrushchev, *On Peaceful Coexistence*, 149.

men in uniform.”⁸³ The leadership of the military was already questioning Khrushchev openly in his push for doctrinal changes and political education in the military. The 1960 Supreme Soviet speech further strengthened their resolve. Questioning doctrine from a political standpoint, in the minds of the military, undermined their institutional realm of military professionalism. Reactions varied from 1960 to Khrushchev’s ouster in 1964, but Khrushchev’s speech managed to stratify the military. The Stalingrad Group, which had owed their positions to Khrushchev’s patronage, began to question Khrushchev’s ideas on military strategy and doctrine. Even those seemingly most loyal to him began to question his judgement concerning the sole reliance on nuclear weapons.

Following Khrushchev at the Supreme Soviet in January, Malinovskii spoke in greater detail on strategy and developing doctrinal changes. Although the basis of his argument followed that of Khrushchev, Malinovskii pointed out that nuclear forces alone still did not provide for total victory in war. Throughout the following years, this argument became the basis for the debate among the military itself and between the military and Party leaders. “The rocket troops of our Armed Forces unquestionably are the main service of the Armed Forces, but we realize that one kind of troops cannot resolve all the tasks of war.”⁸⁴ All branches of the military, working together in tandem, must be utilised, and coordinated in their attack or defence, to provide victory in war. Malinovskii meant that conventional forces, even armed with battlefield nuclear weapons, were to be used on future, nuclear, battlefields. Territory must still be controlled and held! A larger question was how a modern force in Khrushchev’s mind was to fight a localised war. How was it to fight a conventional land war?

⁸³ N.S. Khrushchev, *On Peaceful Coexistence*, 150.

⁸⁴ R.Ya Malinovskii, *Pravda*, 15 January 1960.

As Minister of Defence, Malinovskii had to act as an intermediary between the Party and the military leaders. Writing for officers in *Krasnaya zvezda*, Malinovskii stated:

Before a decision is taken on questions of organisation and military development and of strengthening the Armed Forces' combat power, the Central Committee and the Presidium with the First Secretary, Comrade Khrushchev, make a thorough study of the state of affairs and the concrete conditions in the Army and Navy, in consultation with the Army commanders, [which] enables the Party and its Central Committee to reach correct, well-thought-out decisions on the most complicated questions of military development in Lenin's way.⁸⁵

Despite those words, Marshal Malinovskii was not entirely convinced of Khrushchev's new strategic thought. The Party, including Khrushchev, did meet with military officers prior to the Supreme Soviet meeting; however, military commanders were angry the debate was dictated from above. Military circles were presented with a *fait accompli*.⁸⁶ Throughout the 1960s, Malinovskii tacitly supported Khrushchev in public, but in his own mind reserved judgement on new strategic thought.

At the Twenty-second Party Congress, held in 1961, Malinovskii further distanced himself from Khrushchev's doctrine. In his speech to the Congress, Malinovskii stated the next war would be one of combined arms despite the development of nuclear weaponry.⁸⁷ Although those weapons change the face of warfare, "we nevertheless come to the conclusion that final victory over the aggressor can be achieved only as a result of the joint actions of all the services of the armed forces."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ R. Ya. Malinovskii, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 14 April 1960.

⁸⁶ Protocol 253, 14 December 1959, "o dal'neshikh shagakh po bor'ba za oslablennii mezhdunarodnoe napryazhennosti," *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964*. Tom 1 (Moscow; Rosslen, 2004), 395-397.

⁸⁷ R. Ya. Malinovskii, *Pravda*, 25 October 1961.

⁸⁸ R. Ya. Malinovskii, *XXII s"yezd kommunisticheskoi partii sovetskogo soyuza: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1962), 108-121.

As in the 1953-1955 discussions on doctrine and strategy concerning nuclear weapons and the inevitability of war and Malenkov's removal, the debate amongst military officers for or against Khrushchev's policy was played out on the public stage. While some officers, such as Malinovskii, were guarded in their criticism, other officers were not so contained in the public responses to Khrushchev's new strategic doctrine. General of the Army Kurasov attacked Khrushchev ideas in a strongly worded article published in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*. Kurasov argued that mass armies held an important role in modern warfare even with the arrival of nuclear weapons. Thus, the state must maintain investment in heavy industries and conventional weaponry. Monistic theories on warfare doctrine are dangerous. If your only response is nuclear weapons, how do you respond to less violent conflicts?⁸⁹ Where is the proportionality? Above all, the debate facilitated the schism within the Stalingrad Group. Perceived pro-Khrushchev officers, such as Biryuzov, Moskalenko, and Chuikov, were pitted against more moderate, professional military (in the sense that the military is their primary duty and where loyalties reside) such as Malinovskii, Grechko, Zakharov, and Krylov. The more powerful officers, with a greater sense of military professionalism, specifically Malinovskii and Grechko, became opposed to Khrushchev's ideas and plans for the military. Khrushchev supported those who supported him by elevating them into positions of leadership - illustrating the choice of mediocracy over meritocracy. Marshal Krylov attacked the fundamental ideas behind Khrushchev's plans. He also reignited the debate over the criticism and self-criticism of

⁸⁹ Kurasov, "Voprosy sovetskoi voennoi nauki v proizvedeniakh V.I. Lenina," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 3 (March 1961): 3-14.

officers and the unity of command (*edinonachalie*). Krylov advocated the strengthening of unity of command within units.⁹⁰

Article after article in *Krasnaya zvezda* argued against Khrushchev's new doctrine. Nuclear weapons and the element of surprise alone did not guarantee victory. 'In [a] new war, massive multimillion armies would, without a doubt, be participating, which would require large reserves of commanding personnel and vast contingents of soldiers.'⁹¹ In *Izvestiya*, Rotmistrov maintained the importance of ground forces in modern warfare. Rotmistrov simply argued that while nuclear weapons have enormous destructive power, they "do not conquer territory." As nuclear technology advanced, so did advancements and breakthroughs in the technology of conventional weaponry.⁹² Writing the year Khrushchev was ousted, Rotmistrov went even further in the argument to maintain a strong conventional force alongside the development of nuclear armaments.

Nuclear weapons are powerful and formidable, but they do not occupy territory. Soldiers are needed for the final defeat of the enemy in areas of nuclear strikes. However, it is difficult for soldiers to move into areas subjected to nuclear attack. Under those conditions, tank forces are best suited for carrying out bold, dynamic combat operations.⁹³

After 1960, opinions were increasingly voiced for the retention of a sizable conventional military force as the Soviet nuclear arsenal was developed and expanded.

Not only did the military oppose the policies of Khrushchev concerning doctrine, but they also disdained the sacking of 250,000 officers. The sacking occurred without any retraining and

⁹⁰ Krylov, "Vsemerno ukrepiat edinonachalie," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 27 September 1961.

⁹¹ Leutinant-General S. Krasil'nikov, "O kharakere sovremennoi voyny," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 18 November 1960.

⁹² P. Rotmistrov, *Izvestiya*, 20 October 1962.

⁹³ P. Rotmistrov, "Yavlyautsya tanki nuzhny" (Are Tanks Needed?) in A.A. Grechko (editor), *Yadernii vek i voina* (Moscow: Izvestiya Publishing House, 1964), 91-92.

often, without recourse to a government pension. The forced retirement involved the loss of the housing allowance afforded to Soviet officers. The practice of using conscripted soldiers in the civilian economy, as had occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, was resumed. That led to revolts by some military construction units such as that which happened at Kemerovo in 1955. Soldiers who still had time left in the military service were transferred to civilian construction brigades until the end of their terms of service. When those who were about to be demobilised had their terms of service extended by six months the soldiers revolted against the authorities.⁹⁴ Above all, the military saw Khrushchev's policies as a threat against the prerogatives as military professionals.⁹⁵

Matthew Evangelista argued Khrushchev's conventional force cuts were perhaps the most significant in the history of the Soviet Union. Evangelista showed evidence that those reductions were primarily unilateral in nature and focused on Soviet-initiated proposals for disarmament. Reductions to conventional forces began in August 1955 with a cut of 650,000 troops (see Appendix B); in 1956 another cut of 1,200,000 troops was announced; in January 1958 a further 300,000 soldiers were demobilised. Speaking to American journalists in November 1957, the recently elevated Minister of Defence, Marshal Malinovskii, stated that the Soviet army had been reduced by 1,400,000 "over the last couple of years."⁹⁶ In his speech to the Supreme Soviet in 1960, Khrushchev outlined another demobilisation of 1,200,000 soldiers, which included 250,000 officers. The demobilisation announced was never completely carried out.

⁹⁴ Vladimir Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years* (Armonk; M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 44-66.

⁹⁵ Colonel I. Korotkov, "O razvetii sovetskoi voennoi teorii v poslevoennye gody," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 4. (April 1964): 39-50.

⁹⁶ Matthew Evangelista, "'Why Keep Such an Army?' Khrushchev's Troop Reductions," Working Paper No. 19, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC: December 1997, 5.

Khrushchev advocated and defended those reductions based on the ideas of modernity. Modernisation within the Soviet armed forces allowed for reductions to conventional forces; a greater reliance and burden for the defence of the Soviet Union was to rest with its nuclear deterrent and the Strategic Rocket Forces. Mass armies, such that fought World War II, were no longer viable on the battlefield in the nuclear age. How were massed troops to function on a nuclear battlefield? Those last two thoughts were to be the focus of the debate among the Party, especially Khrushchev, and the military. However, the debate which started after the speech to the Supreme Soviet was to fracture the leadership of the military as well. The Stalingrad Group, by 1960 firmly entrenched in the commanding heights of the Ministry of Defence, General Staff, and the most important military districts in the USSR, fractured in their support of Khrushchev's new military doctrine focused on nuclear forces. Personalities clashed over the use of conventional forces on a possible nuclear battlefield. Some officers argued nuclear battlefields and war only fostered greater necessity for such forces. Only conventional weapons could still hold terrain in the next war.

After Khrushchev

Soviet power struggles and succession followed no designated process. Intra-Party machinations determined the succession of leaders of the CPSU. Garthoff argued that because there was no clear succession law, the Party, the state bureaucracy, the security organs, and the military all conspired to play an important role in succession struggles and had a decisive impact on those struggles.⁹⁷ As argued above, each played an important role in the ouster of Malenkov

⁹⁷ Raymond L. Garthoff, "The Military in Soviet Politics," *Problems of Communism* 6, no. 6 (November-December 1957): 45-48.

in 1955. The Party carried the day over the state bureaucracy. The military gained prestige over the security apparatus due to their tacit support for Khrushchev over Malenkov. Shifting factional elements tried to co-opt the support of the army in various Kremlin power plays.

The Soviet military stood idly by as the other interest groups of power conspired to remove Khrushchev from the Kremlin. According to Kolkowicz, the Supreme Soviet speech by Khrushchev, in January 1960, hastened the deterioration of relations between the Party and military, while at the same time causing a schism within the ranks of the Soviet high command.⁹⁸ Kolkowicz attributed the acceleration of Khrushchev to those two developments. Kolkowicz's emphasis on the military's role in Khrushchev's ouster was overstated. While Khrushchev's policy has been termed riding "roughshod over military concerns and interests," by Taylor, the military decided not to act to save Khrushchev in 1964.⁹⁹ Irrespective of the fact they were not asked to take a political role in 1964, the Soviet military tacitly decided to improve their lot by allowing the removal of Khrushchev, who had dramatically tried to change the nature and structure of the Soviet Armed Forces. Above all, the Presidium, whose members conspired to remove Khrushchev, had no members from the military in 1964. Neither Malinovskii nor his First Deputy Minister of Defence, Marshal Grechko, were members of the Presidium. No member of the military was told of the decision until two days before the actual move against Khrushchev. Pyotr Shelest, Ukrainian Party Secretary, overheard Malinovskii say to Semichastnyi, head of the KGB, that the military was "outside politics."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, 151.

⁹⁹ Brian Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army, Civil-Military Relations 1689-2000* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 190.

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, 190.

After Khrushchev's removal, there was a shift away from his all or nothing approach to doctrine [doctrine in the sense of the handed-down military policies of the CPSU]. Although since the early 1960s the military leaders were openly questioning the doctrinaire policies of the CPSU, a real shift only occurred after October 1964. In 1969, a mere five years on, Marshal Grechko, at that point serving as Minister of Defence, led a shift of doctrine away from the reliance on nuclear weapons and the Strategic Rocket Forces. Marshal Grechko advocated the preparedness to fight the next war without nuclear weapons. "Although not neglecting the continued development of its strategic nuclear forces, the Soviet leadership put new emphasis on theater forces, both nuclear and conventional."¹⁰¹ Although speaking in 1969, Grechko's words echoed those above from officers in the leadership of the military who spoke out against the sole reliance on nuclear weapons after Khrushchev's January 1960 speech to the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the military doctrine of the Soviet Union was heavily debated amongst Party and military leaders. The selection of personalities and individuals into military leadership roles by Khrushchev greatly influenced that debate. Whereas Zhukov was a strong-willed personality who privately and publicly voiced support and criticism of Khrushchev's policies, Malinovskii was more veiled in his support for Khrushchev. Khrushchev initially supported Malinovskii because the Party leader saw the marshal as a supporter, of one of the mediocre officers who would be more easily controlled. The importance of the Stalingrad Group waned as fractures developed in that cohesive body. Officers such as Chuikov placed loyalty to Khrushchev above their own military professionalism. Time and time again Talenskii

¹⁰¹ A.A. Grechko, "Rastushchyei roli, zadach i obyazannostyei molodykh ofitserov na sovremennom etape razvitiya voozruzhennykh sill SSSR," (The Growing Roles, Tasks, and the Obligations of Young Officers at the Contemporary Stage of Development of the Soviet Armed Forces) *Krasnaya zvezda*, 22 November 1969.

wrote in publication of his own concern for the military under Khrushchev to the detriment of his own career. Personal loyalty to Khrushchev, and his elevation of those officers into the central apparatus of the armed forces were driving factor in support from officers throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 2: Zhukov and Civil-Military Relations

John Keegan wrote that in Marshal Georgii Zhukov were united all the necessary qualities of a great military leader. Strategic and tactical knowledge, along with courage, leadership, and political influence during the Great Patriotic War, made Zhukov one of the most respected military commanders on both sides of that conflict.¹ Writing at the time of Zhukov's fall from grace under Khrushchev, the Indian ambassador to Moscow, Krishna Menon, wrote the following in his personal diary in November 1957:

No star shone in the Russian firmament after Stalin's death with greater lustre than Zhukov's. The attempts that are now being made to blot it out can only be called pitiful. The Party may succeed in keeping Zhukov's figure out of the public eye, but it will not succeed in keeping his memory out of the hearts of men...Ultimately truth will triumph, and Clio will place Zhukov by the side of such favorites as Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov, and Alexander Nevsky...²

This chapter examines the questions and problems associated with Marshal Zhukov in the post-World War II period. The chapter describes the events in Zhukov's life after World War II. Specifically, it investigates the role of Zhukov in the civil-military relations of the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, while Khrushchev was First Secretary of the CPSU. The broadest question is to what extent did Marshal Georgii Zhukov, as Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union, from January 1955 to October 1957, play a political role? It is argued that Zhukov was foremost a career military professional but was given opportunities to influence Soviet political decisions. Zhukov did use his position in the Central Committee (CC), and as a Presidium member after

¹ Albert Axell, *Marshal Zhukov, The Man Who Beat Hitler* (London: Pearson Longman, 2003), 8.

² Axell, 169. See also K.P.S., *Delhi-Chungking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

1956, to influence the Party on military matters or to push a military agenda on budgetary and spending questions. As Minister of Defence his influence and role as military advisor to the CPSU Presidium was greater than it had been under Stalin. His access to policy discussions and debates was greater once he became a candidate member of the Presidium in 1956 and then a full member of that body in 1957. As an agent of change, Zhukov was given a greater role to profess his opinions on the Soviet military, opinions that challenged the demarcation between the known areas of Party purview concerning military matters. Nonetheless, he was given greater access to voice opinions when brought into the leadership structure of the state. Applying Giddens theory of structuration and the duality of structure, the argument is made that Zhukov was both enabled and constrained by the structure of the Soviet state. As an agent with a strong personality, Zhukov was able to profess opinions now at a leadership level that without those offices held, Zhukov may not have become such a perceived threat by Khrushchev and others in the Presidium. As was shown in his service during World War II, Zhukov was a strong, independent-minded officer, but was not anti-Party yet saw the military as an institution that needed become apolitical in order to function. Those same ideas manifested themselves during his tenure as Minister of Defence.

In two instances Zhukov's rank and position were used by Khrushchev to remove other leadership contenders: against Lavrenti Beria in 1953 and against the 'anti-Party' group in 1957. Does Zhukov's acquiescence to support Khrushchev in both of these cases constitute a political move? How were these instances looked upon in the military and in the leadership of the CPSU? Brought into the political fray, Zhukov moved at the order of Party officials; he acted politically when called upon by the Party. Nonetheless, except these two instances, he was able

to remove himself from overall political machinations during the 1950s. He spoke out in the Presidium when the military perceived the CPSU had crossed a line and began to make policy in areas where the military saw their sole purview - on battlefield tactics versus 'big picture' doctrine and strategy and the demobilization of officers without proper re-training or benefits. The charges leveled against Marshal Zhukov during the October 1957 plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU were overall unsubstantiated. They were exaggerations or outright fabrications, yet they were political charges that needed little evidence to convict. Only his willingness to end the use of dual command can be proven with specific evidence. After reading the transcripts of the October 1957 CC plenum, the primary charge leveled against Zhukov was the creation of his own cult of personality as perceived by Khrushchev and Zhukov's fellow officers. The history of World War II was the weapon of choice by fellow officers against Zhukov in 1957. A study focused on one actor, such as Zhukov, must attempt to place that person into the broader contextual history; for Zhukov that time was the Cold War. Zhukov has to be studied for his role as a decision-maker in the policy decisions of the Cold War. Zhukov commanded the Soviet military in one of the most volatile periods of the Cold War, and he acted as a voice of reason in the course of events that shaped Cold War politics of the time. Were the policies supported by Zhukov ultimately used in the case brought against him in October 1957? By examining Zhukov in a broader context, this chapter will be connected to the wider historical debate on the Cold War and superpower politics.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe, sources previously unavailable are now open to research and interpretation by scholars. However, a study of Zhukov is still limited by the sources available. When attempting to research the Soviet

armed forces and its highest ranking officers, many archives have yet to be opened for examination. An aura of secrecy remain over use of military archives in the former Soviet Union. The Central Military Archives located at Podolsk, outside Moscow, remain inaccessible to Western academicians. Primary material has been taken from those archival sources currently available. Key documents concerning Zhukov were published in 2001 under the editorship of V. Naumov. Along with those documents, holdings at the Hoover Institute and the Cold War International History Project at the Woodrow Wilson Institute provided information about Zhukov's interaction with key military and political persons as well as his involvement in key events such as the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. Naumov's collection of documents contains the final version of the stenographic report of the October 1957 CC plenum. A version of the same document can be found in the Davis Center archives at Harvard as well. The Davis Center version, over 500 pages, contains handwritten notations, in Russian, which are barely legible, but show an official insight into the document. While it is not known who made the notations, it does show how the document was edited before final production of the official version.³ Coupled with the available archival sources, an extensive reading of secondary literature on Zhukov provided insight into previous studies of Zhukov. Substantial memoir literature, both in Russian and English, has been used. Memoirs of Zhukov and Khrushchev have been compared with each other. It has also been necessary to compare different editions of the memoirs of both men. Editions published in the 1970s have been compared with the most recent volumes—the latest edition of Zhukov's memoirs was published in Russian in 1993, and the latest edition of Khrushchev's memoirs was published in Russian (4volumes) in 1999. Time has shown how

³ Stenogramma oktiabrskogo (1957g.) plenuma TsK KPSS, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/%7Ehpcws/documents.htm>.

highly censored both men's memoirs were during the Soviet era. Contemporary newspapers, such as *Pravda*, *Krasnaya zvezda*, *Glasnost*, and *Izvestiya* have been consulted. These newspapers were surveyed particularly for articles written during the period from June to November 1957 in the lead up to Zhukov's ouster from the Ministry of Defense and his posts in the Party. Several Soviet journals were consulted; most helpful has been *Istoricheskii arkhiv* and *Voennaya mysl'*. Over the past five years I have interviewed and had extended correspondence with Sergei Khrushchev on matters dealing with the military policies of the Soviet Union while his father led the CPSU. I have consulted this material and his expertise for pertinent information dealing the relationship between his father and Zhukov, yet compared his recollections to the available primary sources and other first hand accounts.

Zhukov, Hero of the Great Patriotic War

Zhukov served in the Imperial Army with distinction, earning two St. George's Cross for his acts during the First World War. He was chosen for NCO (noncommissioned officer) training in the Imperial Army. Many Tsarist NCOs joined the Red Army after the October Revolution and became 'Red Commanders.' Zhukov was no different. In 1918, Zhukov joined the Red Army, serving in the cavalry. Throughout the Civil War, he served in Semyon Budenny's First Cavalry Army. Wounded in 1919, Zhukov received the Order of the Red Banner, and that year joined the Bolshevik Party.

Zhukov served most of his early years in the Red Army with the cavalry. According to a 2003 biography, wherever he commanded he made sure the soldiers under his command were the

best trained, most-disciplined troops in the Red Army.⁴ During the inter-war years, he was stationed in the Belorussian Military District for a time under Army Commander I.P. Uborevich, a colleague of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevskii. He learned indispensable knowledge of military operational art from Uborevich's teachings, and respected his commanding officer. Because of his acquaintance with Uborevich and Tukhachevskii, he was questioned while stationed in Minsk by Phillip Golikov, who would later rise to the head of the political administration of the Soviet military, during the purges of the military carried out by Stalin. That began a lifetime of disdain for political workers and political commissars. Despite the interrogation, Zhukov survived the purges, unlike his mentors, Uborevich and Tukhachevskii.

Zhukov appreciated the dictums of Tukhachevskii on mechanized infantry, motorized divisions, and tank warfare. He successfully employed the tactics of encirclement, deep pincer movements, and annihilation against the Japanese Army at the Battle of Khalkin-Gol in 1939. Mechanized forces were the key to Zhukov's victory against the Japanese. "Zhukov had passed the test of Khalkin-Gol with flying colors."⁵ His victory also showed the Party and armed forces' leadership that mechanized forces were the future of warfare, thereby proving that Tukhachevskii was correct in his doctrinal and strategic thought in the 1930s. As Minister of Defence under Khrushchev, he believed those tactics were still valuable and viable on a nuclear battlefield.

In June 1940, Zhukov was promoted to General of the Army and sent to command the Kiev Special Military District. It was in Kiev that he first met Khrushchev, who was then the

⁴ Axell, 41-43.

⁵ John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command, A Military-Political History, 1918-1941* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 537. Zhukov showed at Khalkin-Gol that Tukhachevskii was correct in writing in the 1939 Red Army draft Field Regulations that encirclement and destruction of the enemy became the goal of modern armies equipped with armored and mechanized formations.

head of the Ukrainian Party apparatus. He would only serve in Kiev until February 1941, when he was called to Moscow to become Chief of the Soviet General Staff. He held that post when, on 22 June 1941, the German *Wehrmacht* invaded the Soviet Union.

Understanding Zhukov's role in World War II is necessary for contextualizing Zhukov's career after the war when he was cast out of Moscow by Stalin, his rise to the top of the military leadership and subsequent fall under Khrushchev. It was his charismatic, and harsh, leadership style in commands he held from the 1930s onward that created the tense relationship with his contemporaries as well as Stalin. Shown throughout the war, those traits would be negative qualities associated with Zhukov by Stalin and his successor. Throughout the war, Zhukov showed his sense of professionalism over careerism. Despite his military professionalism, Zhukov was willing to defeat Germany at any cost, especially the lives of his soldiers. That history is still debated today, and certainly was used against him in the CC Plenum in October 1957.

Shortly after the beginning of WWII, Zhukov was sent back to Kiev by Stalin to assess the situation in front of the Germans advancing into Ukraine. By July 1941, he had taken command of the Southern and South-West *Fronts*. Then, Zhukov was replaced by Marshal Boris Shaposhnikov as Chief of the General Staff. Zhukov's postings throughout the war were characterized by frequent movements from *Fronts* and cities, which were the focal point of the German onslaught and the Red Army's defense against it. He commanded five different Fronts throughout the war; Zhukov was always present, on the orders of Stalin, at the most crucial theatre of the war.⁶ From the south, Zhukov was sent to Leningrad (via Moscow) to reexamine

⁶ Marshal Vasilevskii, foreword to *Marshal of the Soviet Union G. Zhukov: Reminiscences and Reflections* 2 vols., by G.K. Zhukov (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), 9.

the defenses of the city. In September 1941, he arrived in Leningrad and replaced Marshal Kliment Voroshilov as commander of the defenses of the city. Zhukov was sent to Leningrad to strengthen the defenses of the city by primarily fortifying the resolve of those units stationed there. After sternly reprimanding commanding officers and soldiers at Leningrad, Zhukov redistributed and strengthened the defenses of the city. By 25 September, the defensive ring around Leningrad was stabilized and the Germans began siege tactics.⁷

From Leningrad, Zhukov flew to Moscow to fortify the defenses of the Soviet capital. Throughout the fall and winter 1941, Zhukov was again on scene at the crucial point of the war when the Germans were making their final assault to break through to the Soviet capital. His movement to crucial points of battle was always on the orders of Stalin. Alongside 90,000 Soviet soldiers fought 250,000 Muscovite citizens—seventy-five percent of them women.⁸ Aligned with Zhukov were some of the greatest war commanders of the Soviet Army. In front of Moscow the German *Wehrmacht* faced a formidable Soviet command group, including, Zhukov, Rokossovsky, Konev, and Vatutin.⁹ Moscow was to be defended at all costs. By December 1941, the Soviets launched their first counterattack, and then launched an assault against the whole of the German Army Group Center during January-March 1942. Moscow was saved. Later that year Zhukov, along with Aleksandr Vasilevskii, was sent to Stalingrad, which was to be the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front and the Second World War in Europe.

⁷ John Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad, Stalin's War With Germany*. vol.1, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 192-195.

⁸ Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 218.

⁹ Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 222. "Zhukov the strategist, field commander in the style of Rokossovskii, Konev, Vatutin, specialists such as Voronov and Govorov, energetic armored commanders in the persons of Katukov, Rotmistrov and Bogdanov, Novikov with air force, men who knew their job and learned more each day."

Despite minor setbacks, from Stalingrad onwards, the Red Army was on the offensive right through to the capitulation of Berlin in May 1945. Zhukov acted together with Vasilevskii as *Stavka* representatives for the planning of the counteroffensive against Germany and Axis forces surrounding Stalingrad. According to John Erickson, the presence of Zhukov and Vasilevskii at Stalingrad helped bridge the gap seen by many *Front* commanders between themselves and those handling overall strategy in Moscow. *Front* commanders believed *Stavka* underestimated the operational-tactical situations when looking at the ‘big picture.’¹⁰ Zhukov traveled back and forth between Stalingrad and Moscow throughout the fall 1942. The plan, which called for an encirclement of the German VI Army under the command of Von Paulus, began with a Soviet armor strike against the Romanian LI Army on the German flank. The conceptualisation and finalisation of the Soviet counteroffensive began a great debate in the postwar years between those who served as *Front* and Army commanders at Stalingrad (the so-called ‘Stalingrad Group’) and those who served in *Stavka*. Who had formulated the plan to counterattack and encircle the German army group polarised officers against one another. Commanders at the local level, primarily General Yeremenko, pushed for sole credit of creating the successful plan which led to victory at Stalingrad. Nonetheless, Zhukov and other *Stavka* officers push for credit in creating the overall strategic plan and giving local commanders the freedom of how to carry out the central command’s ultimate goals for victory. That debate factored into military officers attacks against Zhukov in 1957.

Before the battle of Stalingrad, in August 1942, Zhukov was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief and First Deputy Defense Commissar; both titles made him second in

¹⁰ Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 373.

command only to Stalin of all Soviet forces. After the victory at Stalingrad in January 1943, Zhukov was promoted to Marshal of the Soviet Union.

From Stalingrad, Zhukov commanded the overall force readied for the battle of Kursk. Zhukov was given the task of the defense and counter-strike at Prokhorovka, the site of the largest tank battle of the Second World War on either front. Zhukov did not fail the Red Army, and the action at Kursk “bore a typical Zhukov ‘look.’”¹¹ The mastery of the use of mechanized forces alongside armor was a trademark of Zhukov. Present at Kursk was Viktor Anfilov, later a veteran and a researcher at the Soviet General Staff Military History Department, 1957-1964. Anfilov recalled how, at Kursk, cheers of “Where there’s Zhukov, there’s victory,” could be heard from Red Army soldiers.¹²

For Operation Bagration, designed to push the Germany army from Belorussia and make inroads into Poland, Zhukov commanded the 1st and 2nd Belorussian *Fronts*. He took command of these troops in May 1944. From the successful completion of Operation Bagration, Zhukov took command of the 1st Belorussian *Front* on 16 November 1944, and Rokossovsky assumed command of the 2nd Belorussian *Front*. Zhukov’s command was to spearhead the assault on Berlin. The final assault on Berlin was being planned. Ivan Konev commanded the 1st Ukrainian *Front*, which was to move on the southern flank of Zhukov’s 1st Belorussian *Front*. Zhukov was determined to take Berlin. “Advance or face dire consequences,” was the order given by Zhukov to his commanders.¹³ Berlin fell to Zhukov on 2 May 1945. Again, the history of the battle for

¹¹ John Erickson, *The Road to Berlin, Stalin’s War With Germany*. Vol. 2, (London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 2003), 118.

¹² Viktor Anfilov, “Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov,” in *Stalin’s Generals*, by Harold Shukman (London: Phoenix, 1977), 355.

¹³ Erickson, *The Road to Berlin...*, 572.

Berlin became an issue of contention in the post-Stalinist years among Marshals Zhukov and Konev. As one of Stalin's favoured officers, Zhukov wanted to take Berlin on his own, leaving Konev to guard his forces' exposed left flank. Konev was to mop up resistance in the southern suburbs, while the main attack on Berlin and thus capitulation was to be Zhukov's alone. Both argued over the timing of the capture of Berlin and the high Soviet casualty numbers. Zhukov faced the stiffest German resistance in front of him, especially taking the Seelow Heights, while Konev's path was relatively easier, but difficult nonetheless. Konev argued that if he was given priority, his forces would have taken Berlin sooner than actually occurred. Konev and Zhukov disagreed on the overall strategic plan for capturing Berlin; Konev would bring that historical debate to discussion when called to speak out against Zhukov in 1957. Konev argued, both in 1945 and in the 1950s, that his forces were better prepared and faced less resistance, thus, they could have taken Berlin earlier and quicker than Zhukov. Zhukov argued the reverse to Stalin. Zhukov, with his stubborn personality, wanted Berlin for himself.

Marshal Georgii Zhukov was a popular hero of the Great Patriotic War. Soviet citizens looked at Zhukov as a popular national hero, not unlike Minin and Pozharsky who liberated Moscow in the Time of Troubles. Zhukov captured Berlin and fought with vigor in the most vital and decisive battles on the Eastern Front. Stalin gave Zhukov the honor of receiving the salute of the Victory Parade on 24 June 1945 that took place on Red Square. Zhukov believed Stalin should take the salute of the parade but Stalin said he was "too old to review parades."¹⁴ Zhukov rode out of the Kremlin's Spasskii Gate on a brilliant white steed and took the salute from his friend, Hero of the Soviet Union Marshal Rokossovskii. Zhukov was at the pinnacle of his

¹⁴ Richard Overy, *Russia's War* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 281. It is known that Stalin tried to mount the horse to be used for the Victory Parade but was unable to. That story has been told by Stalin's son Vasily.

military career. After the parade, he returned to Germany to command the Soviet forces stationed there and to act as the Soviet plenipotentiary on the Allied Control Commission set up to administer postwar Germany.

Zhukov's Expulsion and Return to Moscow, 1946-1954

Zhukov was triumphant; he led the Soviet Union to victory over Hitler's Germany. He had been promoted to the highest rank, Marshal of the Soviet Union, in January 1943 and received its highest honor, Hero of the Soviet Union. While in Germany, he worked well with his allied counterparts, especially American General Dwight Eisenhower, with whom he forged a good working relationship and a close friendship. According to a 2003 study, Zhukov was perceived as the people's hero; Soviet citizens and the military admired him for his brilliance in leading the country to victory. His popularity was a negative attribute in the eyes of Stalin. It was understood that the main credit for the Soviet victory was to go to Stalin. Axell went even further in arguing that Stalin was jealous of Zhukov's genuine popularity with Soviet citizens.¹⁵ Stalin was wary of a Decembrist style revolt similar to that which happened when Russian officers and soldiers victoriously returned from Europe at the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Working with Allied military officers in Germany, Zhukov believed both sides could achieve and maintain peace as long as the politicians did not interfere. Shortly after the end of the war General Eisenhower remembered an incident dealing with omnipresent Soviet political officers assigned to Zhukov:

¹⁵ Axell, 160-61.

The Marshal had scant patience with political men. Once, when I told him that I wanted to talk about military matters and had not brought along my political advisor, I added that he could have his present if he liked. ‘No,’ he replied, ‘if you’re not going to have yours I’m going to throw mine out.’ He turned to Andrei [Vyshinskii], his advisor, and said, ‘Get out, I don’t want you here.’¹⁶

In April 1946, Zhukov left Berlin for Moscow to take up the posts of Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces and Deputy Defence Minister. Stalin nominated him to the Central Committee of the CPSU. It seemed Zhukov was at the pinnacle of his military career. Later that year Zhukov tried to devise new combat training orders/manuals, but none were approved. Both Lavrenti Beria and Viktor Abakumov, however, had been watching Zhukov and other prominent military officers since the war years. Beria coerced officers, through threats and torture, close to Zhukov to denounce the Marshal, through methods that were anything but humane. Those officers who did speak about Zhukov did so only under torture.¹⁷ Zhukov was accused of taking too much credit for victory. The security and internal affairs forces repeatedly searched Zhukov’s *dacha* to look for valuables, monies, jewelry, and furniture that he supposedly stole from Germany. Most valuables found were gifts from dignitaries or foreign military officers. As hard as Beria tried, Zhukov remained resilient and strong. Despite the lack of substantive evidence, Beria’s work did convince Stalin that Zhukov was too popular to be kept in high command positions and in Moscow.

¹⁶ Otto Preston Chaney, *Zhukov*. Revised edition (Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1996), 329. Zhukov invited Eisenhower to Moscow. He accepted. Eisenhower and Zhukov, along with Stalin and other members of the Politburo reviewed the National Sports Parade on 12 August 1945. Eisenhower invited Zhukov to the United States, he accepted at first, but then said he was unable to make the trip due to illness—many speculate that this was a “diplomatic illness.” It should be known that in the United States, any officer who is promoted to the rank of General must be approved by the US Congress before receiving such a rank.

¹⁷ Overy, 304-305. Abakumov headed *Smersh* during the Great Patriotic War and became chief of the NKGB in 1948. In April 1943 the security forces were separated from the NKVD and renamed NKGB, and in March 1946 the NKGB became the MGB when commissariats became ministries.

After only three months as Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces and Deputy Defense Minister, Zhukov was reassigned to lesser military posts outside Moscow. In June 1946, he was relieved of his command posts and expelled from the Central Committee. He was replaced in those military positions by Marshal Konev. Zhukov was determined not to change his command style while exiled to a post of less importance than his postings in Moscow. He stayed as vigilant and demanding as ever.¹⁸ Soldier and officers under Zhukov trained for long hard hours and discipline was harsh for those who stepped out of line. Stalin's removal of Zhukov from the high command of the Soviet Armed Forces was to be the first of two removals, the second came under Khrushchev in 1957.

In February 1948, Zhukov was transferred from Odessa to Sverdlovsk to take command the Urals Military District. Vigilance and constant training of the men under his command kept Zhukov sane and militarily sharp.¹⁹ While Zhukov was in Sverdlovsk, Beria continued to search for material against him, trying in vain to gather enough to have Zhukov arrested. In 1948, constant worrying caused by hassle from NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs-*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*) personnel led Zhukov to suffer a heart attack. While posted to the Urals Military District, Zhukov fell in love with Galina Aleksandrovna.

Aleksandrovna was a medical doctor who attended to Zhukov.²⁰ Zhukov sought a divorce from his first wife with whom he had two daughters—Era and Ella. The divorce from his first wife did not become official until the 1960s. Divorces were hard to obtain in the Soviet Union.

According to Sergei Khrushchev, when writing about Zhukov's retirement, divorces in the Soviet

¹⁸ Anfilov, 357.

¹⁹ Vladimir Dainec, *Zhukov, rozhdenii pobezhdai* (Moscow: Yauza, Eksmo, 2008), 542-43.

²⁰ Chaney, 379.

Union were frowned upon more severely than in the Roman Catholic Church.²¹ More stories were fabricated about his time in Germany, about stolen valuables, and his thoughts on who actually won the war for the Soviets. 1945 to 1953 was a trying time for the Soviet military, especially for victorious officers. The cult of Stalin, as the victorious leader, was everywhere; the military had lost all acknowledgment whatsoever in contributing to victory over the forces of Hitlerite Germany. The immediate post-war years were a time of reassertion of Party control over the military and the cleansing of the military ranks.²² That, however, was an unnecessary reassertion. In February 1946, Stalin used his so-called “Victory Speech” to put the Armed Forces in their place when speaking on the sources of the Soviet victory over Germany. Stalin used the speech to give full credit to the CPSU. The Soviet Armed Forces were not anti-Party after the Great Patriotic War, but they wanted the credit and respect due to them for defending the Soviet Union.

While ‘exiled’ to Odessa and Sverdlovsk, in lesser military command posts, Zhukov remained vigilant and thorough in his duties training and administering those troops under his command. Notwithstanding his posting outside the power hub of Moscow and the constant persecution of Beria and his accomplices, Zhukov remained the quintessential military professional. Examinations of his time from 1946 to 1952 illustrates Zhukov’s duty to his country, the highest honor in which he held himself, and that no matter what he was asked by the

²¹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 30.

²² Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), 71. The Soviet system was well-practiced in writing persons out of history. Others shared the same fate as Zhukov. Rokossovskii, Konev, Vatutin, Voronov were never mentioned in the press or publications. Chief of Staff Antonov was exiled to the Transcaucasian Military District. Chief of the Soviet Air Force, Marshal Aleksandr Novikov was arrested, viciously interrogated by Beria’s henchmen, and forced to falsely admit to sabotaging aviation production. See Overy, 304-306.

Party, he was going to fulfill his obligation to the Soviet Union. From hero to outcast, Zhukov proudly served the current authorities of the Soviet state.

Zhukov remained in peripheral military postings for the first five years after the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War. In 1950-51, Zhukov made a few very brief public appearances.²³ Presumably those appearances coincided with celebrations for the May Day holiday and perhaps for the Great October Revolution. Traveling to Poland in July 1951, Zhukov made his first international trip abroad since the war's end²⁴. In October 1952, the Nineteenth Party Congress of the CPSU, the first Party Congress held since 1939, was convened by Stalin. At the Congress, Zhukov was elected a candidate member of the Central Committee of the CPSU.²⁵ It seemed that Zhukov was again back in the good graces of Stalin.

Why bring Zhukov back to Moscow? Why elevate Zhukov to a member of the CC, a decision-making body of the Party? The Cold War was heating up. War on the Korean peninsula was intensifying, and US intervention was greatly improving the military capabilities of the South Korean forces. Stalin presumably brought back his tried and true war horse because thoughts of a possible war with the West were not far out of the leader's mind. Stalin still held Zhukov in the highest regard for his military prowess. Stalin's welcome of Zhukov back in Moscow only strengthens the argument that his 'exile' was an ideological decision by Stalin who was wary of any popular support held by Zhukov. Presumably, Stalin believed Zhukov had become less of a threat as a charismatic, people's hero. Perhaps he believed Zhukov had shown politics was of no interest to him. Perhaps Zhukov had proved that he had no aims to be the

²³ Raymond Garthoff, *Soviet Military Policy: A Historical Analysis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 44.

²⁴ Chaney, 379.

²⁵ Kolkowicz, 76. At the 19th Party Congress of the CPSU an unusually large amount of military professionals were given membership in the Central Committee.

leader of a military coup against the Party. Whatever the reason, Zhukov was back serving in Moscow when Stalin passed away on 5 March 1953.

The Road to Moscow and the Leadership Struggle

Within one week of Stalin's death, the Ministries of War and the Navy were combined into a newly formed Ministry of Defense. Nikolai Bulganin was named Minister of Defense; Marshals Zhukov and Vasilevskii and Admiral Nikolai Kuznetsov became the First Deputy Ministers. Zhukov was also named Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces, a position he held prior to being 'exiled' to Odessa. Marshal Konev had replaced Zhukov then, and now Zhukov had reassumed his former role, replacing Konev.

Zhukov's star was on the rise again. Out of the shadow of Stalin's obdurate leadership, Zhukov readied to mould the Soviet military into an advanced, superior fighting force. At no time in his career, however, did Zhukov have a need for the political administration within the Soviet Armed Forces. The GPU (*glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie*), which controlled political workers/officers within the Soviet military, equaled a parallel structure to the Ministry of Defense. The GPU reported directly to the Central Committee, not to the Ministry of Defence. At all levels and structures within the Soviet armed forces, the Party-political control organs of the GPU operated. From small squads to the Ministry of Defense itself, the GPU administered political workers.²⁶ Throughout his tenure, Zhukov implemented directives that increasingly limited interference by the GPU into military affairs and training.

²⁶ Kolkowicz, 84.

During the first years after Stalin's death, there were two intensive leadership struggles within the collective leadership that took control in 1953. The military 'intervened' on these occasions, but they did so only at the request of the Party leadership. Nonetheless, the issues the military chose to voice and opinion on or provide counsel were advantageous to the Soviet military. They also intervened to defend and argue in support of purely military issues such as views on the next war, new military technology, budgetary concerns, and the overall defense of the Soviet Union, all of which had potential political consequences.

In June 1953, three months after the death of Stalin, Malenkov and Khrushchev, along with most of the members of the Presidium of the CC, moved against Beria. Beria was known to have aspirations of leadership. He was in a very powerful position as head of the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs); he thus controlled significant numbers of internal troops, security services, and border guards. Beria had the loyal support of thousands of internal security troops, not to mention that he controlled the Kremlin garrison guards.²⁷ His position also allowed him to eavesdrop and spy on his fellow Presidium members, to track their movements, and if needed, arrest them in the middle of the night if he thought they were planning a move against him.

By 26 June 1953, Beria had successfully moved two state security units into Moscow. Those were the First Red Banner Dzerzhinskii Motorised Infantry and the Second Motorised Infantry divisions.²⁸ They certainly amounted to a formidable military presence. Khrushchev, Malenkov and other members of the Presidium decided to request senior military commanders to assist in the removal and arrest of Beria. According to Khrushchev, it was his idea to invite key

²⁷ Beria had several thousand uniformed security troops, some tanks and armoured personnel carriers, border guards, a small air force, the uniformed police, Gulag guards, and he was also in charge of the Soviet atomic weapons program. William Thompson, *Khrushchev: A Political Life* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997), 118.

²⁸ Chaney, 384.

marshals and generals to arrest Beria. He first invited Marshal Kirill Moskalenko. It was after this action by Khrushchev that Malenkov and Bulganin invited Zhukov to participate in the arrest.²⁹ Malenkov and Bulganin seemed wary of Khrushchev asking for the assistance of an officer from Khrushchev's past in Stalingrad, a close ally. The leader of the government and the head of the military asked for the assistance of a much stronger, higher ranking officer to balance a chance 'threat' from Khrushchev and Moskalenko. Moskalenko would have to defer to Zhukov through the military chain of command.

Colonel-General Pavel Artemev commanded the Moscow Military District in 1953. Artemev was a former NKVD officer close to Beria. His removal was of the utmost importance as a precursor to any move against Beria. O.P. Chaney presumed that Moskalenko replaced Artemev as the commander of the Moscow Military District; Moskalenko retained his command of the Moscow air defense forces.³⁰ However, Artemev was not removed at such short notice. In June, most of his troops of the Moscow Military District were away from their barracks during summer maneuvers. Moskalenko recruited his command staff take part in the move against Beria. Colonel I.G. Zub, head of the political directorate of the Moscow Air Defence District; P.F. Batitskii, Moskalenko's first deputy; A. Vaksov, Moskalenko's chief of staff; Lt. Col. V. Iuferov, his adjutant, were recruited by their commanding officer. Those officers along with Zhukov met at the Ministry of Defence early on 26 June.³¹ MVD troops stationed at Lefortovo prison were surrounded by regular army forces during the meeting of the Presidium in case they heard about the plans against Beria and moved on the Kremlin.

²⁹ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2, editor Sergei Khrushchev (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 195.

³⁰ William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (London: The Free Press, 2003), 253.

³¹ S. Bystrov, "Zadanie osobogo svoitstva," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 18-20 March 1988.

On 26 June 1953, the Presidium, with the aid of the Soviet military, arrested Beria at a meeting held at the Kremlin. Zhukov and Moskalenko played an influential role in the actual arrest of Beria; they were acting on orders of the Party Presidium and not on their own initiative. Zhukov was quoted as saying, “This is a policeman’s mission that I will fulfill with great pleasure.”³² He had been haunted and accused by Beria and his henchmen from post to post—from Germany to the Urals. Beria tried vainly to have Zhukov arrested many times, and he managed to arrest many officers close to Zhukov. Taking part in the arrest of the man who had caused him much angst must have been a sweet moment for Zhukov. Certainly Zhukov had personal motives to participate in the removal of Beria. Supposedly, he must have known that Beria’s removal would elevate the status of the armed forces over that of the security apparatus in the spheres of influence in decision making. Marshals and generals of the Soviet Armed Forces participated in the arrest. They were instructed to wait in an anteroom near that which the meeting of the Presidium was taking place. On a signal from Malenkov, they were to enter the room and take Beria into custody.

Zhukov, Moskalenko, and Konev entered the meeting when called on by the Presidium members. Beria did not know what to think. He had just been subjected to a verbal barrage of the crimes he had committed against the Soviet Union. Khrushchev read out the indictment against Beria. All the arresting officers had been ordered to wear their side arms into the Kremlin that day; that required them to enter the Kremlin through the Borovitskii gate with members of the Presidium such as Bulganin so as not to be searched. The Kremlin guards were replaced by regular army officers. As the officers took hold of Beria, he started asking what was

³² Chaney, 385.

happening. Zhukov fired back at him, “Silence, you are not in command here.”³³ To prevent an escape, the buttons on Beria’s trousers were cut off. If he ran he would have to hold them up to keep from falling down!³⁴

Beria was driven out of the Kremlin at three o’clock the next morning when the guards were changed and he was held in the headquarters of the Moscow Military District. He was tried by a special Military Tribunal headed by Konev. The trial began on 18 December 1953 and lasted only five days. Trial and punishment were swift. “Death,” was the sentence for Beria, “to be carried out without delay.”³⁵ The officer charged with shooting Beria was unable to do it. Lieutenant-General P.F. Batitskii walked forward and said, “permit me.” Batitskii remembered battlefield commanders during the war, friends he would never forget, who suffered under the harsh hands of Beria.

Zhukov participated directly in the ouster and arrest of Beria; however, it was not on his own initiative. He acted because he was asked to do so by the leadership of the Party; Moskalenko and other officers acted in the same way. In the end, the military did benefit at the expense of the security services. The move by the Party and the government bureaucracy was against the growing importance of the security services immediately after the death of Stalin. The military added in Beria’s ouster because it would gain them prestige and support of the government and Party over the security apparatus. The military officers were called upon by the Party to act in its best interest and for the country. They willingly moved against Beria. Most professional military officers were not supporters of the man whom they had seen destroy the

³³ Axell, 187.

³⁴ Taubman, 254.

³⁵ Colonel Ye. Klimchuk, “How Beriia was Tried and Executed,” *Soviet Soldier* 5 (1990): 59.

careers, and lives, of many decent comrades-in-arms. Zhukov's participation in the move against Beria constituted a political tactic, which the military was tasked with carrying out by the CPSU. Only with hindsight could we ask if the military would have moved against Beria if there was a perceived threat that the Party did not foresee. The military acted 'politically' to remove Beria to their own advantage to the detriment of the security services. Nonetheless, those officers who participated moved on the orders and wishes of Party leaders. They did not move on their own accord. It does not constitute any politico-leadership ambitions on Zhukov's part, although the same Central Committee plenum in September 1953 that had approved the arrest also awarded Zhukov Beria's position as a full member of the Central Committee.

The Kremlin politics between the Party, the Soviet government, and security forces manifested by Khrushchev, Malenkov, and Beria in the struggle for leadership of the USSR had become one-sided after 1953. Allied together against Beria, the government bureaucracy led by Malenkov and the CPSU led by Khrushchev now quarreled for political dominance in the Soviet state. Khrushchev and Malenkov struggled politically against one another, supporting different policies, one trying to overcome the other. The military played into that struggle because both Malenkov and Khrushchev made military concerns—budget, views on strategy and new technology, and the defense of the Soviet Union—into issues pertinent to the leadership struggle. Whoever supported the views the military held tended to garner the military's support. Thus the intra-Party struggle coincidentally forced the professional military to become more politically minded.

[Officers'] more urgent and immediate objectives center on industrial interests of the military, and within that broad concern, on the individual officer's personal and professional interests. Consequently, the military must continually impress upon the political decision-makers the urgency of maintaining a large and efficient

military establishment; of assigning the military a prominent, or at least positive, social role; of subordinating other social and economic objectives and the allocations necessary to their achievement, to the paramount demands of national defense.³⁶

Malenkov overlooked how influential the military was when it came to issues such as budgetary concerns or questions of the national strategic reserve. The military found itself in a strong position—its support, whether for Khrushchev or Malenkov, decided the leadership struggle.

The military disagreed with Malenkov over his call for increased investment in the production of consumer goods, the use of the state reserves, his acceptance of mutual deterrence vis-à-vis the West and the US, and the decrease in military appropriations. Obviously the military and officers would support the political side of this debate that would support their own wishes for more money and material. On 9 August 1953, Malenkov spoke to the Supreme Soviet on the ways to restructure the economy to support the production of consumer goods.³⁷ War was no longer inevitable; thus, Malenkov supported mutual deterrence. Vast amounts of money that had previously been spent on the military-industrial complex were to be shifted to improve the standard of living of Soviet citizens. Military officers, including Zhukov, did not publicly support Khrushchev per se, even though the Malenkov-Khrushchev leadership struggle gave the military a public forum for doing so. Action was not called for if Malenkov was triumphant. The military press, however, began to publish articles that supported the ideas expounded by Khrushchev, although it is uncertain how much editorial freedom those military media outlets had. Khrushchev said what the military high command wanted to hear. The state reserves were

³⁶ Kolkowicz, 106-107.

³⁷ Raymond Garthoff, "The Role of the Military in Recent Soviet Politics," *Russian Review* 16, no. 2 (April 1957); 16.

to be strengthened, not spent; industrial production was not to be decreased in favor of consumer production, and the military would not see its budget slashed.

Between September and October 1953, *Voennaya mysl'* published articles underlining what policies the Soviet government ought to be considering, namely those policies being enumerated by Khrushchev.³⁸ That theoretical and strategy debate has been covered in detail in the previous chapter; only the material, which impacts the role of Zhukov is reiterated herein. The military press castigated Malenkov's outlandish ideas, which would threaten the security and defense of the Soviet Union if undertaken. An article published in *Krasnaya zvezda*, titled "Heavy industry is the basis of the strengthening of the Soviet state," affirmed the supremacy of the defence and heavy industries as the guarantor of Soviet defensive capabilities.³⁹ As Minister of Defense at the time, Bulganin stated that, "heavy industry is the foundation of the indestructible defense capability of the [Soviet Union]."⁴⁰ For his own part in the Khrushchev-Malenkov rivalry for power, Zhukov spoke against mutual deterrence as an "incorrect point of view."⁴¹

Malenkov was removed from the leadership of the government. Bulganin was elevated to the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The Supreme Soviet session that voted for Malenkov's removal also voted for a 12% increase for the defense budget.⁴² Thus for 22 months from March 1953 to January 1955 the military opposed Party leaders who advocated policies that not only ran counter to the hopes of the military, but, if implemented, would have deeply

³⁸ Chaney, 391. See also Garthoff, *Soviet Military Policy...*, 45.

³⁹ *Krasnaya zvezda*, 15 January 1955.

⁴⁰ "Bulganin, Speech to Supreme Soviet," *Izvestiya*, 10 February 1955.

⁴¹ Chaney, 392.

⁴² Garthoff, "The Role of the Military...", 18.

destabilized those traditional institutional interests that even Stalin felt compelled to respect.⁴³

By supporting Khrushchev and leaders who promoted military interests, the military was able to show that it played an important factor in CPSU politics. In February 1955, Zhukov was named the Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union. The alliance of convenient necessity between Zhukov and Khrushchev now became stronger.

Zhukov and Khrushchev: The Alliance of Convenient Necessity

Many changes were implemented in the Soviet military establishment in 1955. Zhukov was named the Minister of Defense. On 11 March 1955, the first postwar promotions occurred with eleven generals and marshals being appointed by the Supreme Soviet. That promotion included many with whom Khrushchev had served at Stalingrad, including: Biryuzov, Moskalenko, Grechko, Krylov, Popov, and Malinin. O.P. Chaney and A. Axell agree that the period between Zhukov's ascension to the top rung of the military leadership and the months before his ouster was the political heyday of the military officer in the Soviet Union during the Khrushchev era. In those two years, the military was most free from constraining Party controls. Zhukov's disdain for political officers and political bodies meddling in military affairs was well-known. As Minister of Defense, he worked to curb the political apparatuses working within and parallel to the Soviet armed forces. This period also saw an exponential rise in new military technology, namely ballistic rocketry and nuclear and thermonuclear weapons.

The GPU worked as a parallel structure to the Ministry of Defense. While Zhukov was Minister of Defense, the GPU was headed by Colonel-General Zheltov. From 1955 to 1957, the

⁴³ Kolkowicz, 108.

GPU was led by Zheltov, a junior officer to Zhukov in rank, stature, and intelligence. Zhukov was assertive, strong-willed, and a militarily intellectual person. Zheltov was comparatively weak in character and a career political officer. Zheltov and the GPU suffered as Zhukov asserted the preeminence of the armed forces and military officers' authority over that of the political administration within the Soviet military. After Zhukov's removal in October 1957, Zheltov was replaced by Fillip Golikov who was promoted to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union and made a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Zheltov was perceived as a weak personality not willing to take on strong-willed military officers.

The role of the political organs with the Soviet Armed Forces was “to observe activities in units and to pass information to higher levels of the apparatus” and “to politicize’ military personnel through intensive indoctrination and political education.”⁴⁴ Part of the GPU's function was to regulate the advancement of officers so that only those who were desirable from a Party point of view were promoted to authoritative positions. All political activity within the military was to be supervised by the GPU. The GPU could compel certain actions through intimidation, threats of dismissal, public humiliation, or simply, outright coercion.⁴⁵ Party and military leaders disagreed over the extent of officers' freedom, the historical role of the military in the Soviet Union, and the degree of institutional autonomy granted to the Soviet Armed Forces. As Minister of Defense, Zhukov worked to limit the functionality of the GPU within the military and restrict their efforts to indoctrinate officers and soldiers.

Zhukov followed Marshals Timoshenko and Vasilevskii as the third professional officer to be Minister of Defence of the Soviet Union; however, neither had been a member of the ruling

⁴⁴ Kolkowicz, 92.

⁴⁵ Kolkowicz, 92.

Politburo while serving as Minister of Defence. As Minister, Zhukov reduced the role of the political administration within the Soviet Armed Forces. He began by allowing military officers voluntarily to attend political education/classes. He believed that “self-study” was necessary so that officers spend more of their time concentrating on military strategy and doctrine, not to mention training and discipline, rather than political indoctrination.⁴⁶ His rationale was simple. Officers serving in the Soviet military in the 1950s were in stark contrast to those of the Civil War, the 1920s and 1930s when the GPU had been instituted. Most had served in the Second World War. They had been raised and educated in the Soviet system. Khrushchev agreed that political training and indoctrination were necessary and vital when the Soviet Armed Forces was in its infancy, but now it was no longer needed. Times had changed since former tsarist officers were recruited by Trotsky and others to serve the Bolshevik cause. No political commissars were necessary to watch over suspect officers. The Soviet officers of the 1950s had been tried and tested against Hitler’s Germany. More time was required for training and military study with the rapidly advancing breakthrough in military technology throughout the early Cold War. Zhukov was not depoliticizing the military, but changing the form of indoctrination. There were no longer military specialists as there had been during the Civil War, and Zhukov saw the need to modernize.⁴⁷ Technocrats rather than ideological sound officers were necessary. As technological knowledge rapidly advanced, officers needed more time to attain proficiency as more complicated, technical weapons systems went into service. Zhukov argued that officers’

⁴⁶ Garthoff, *Soviet Military Policy...*, 51.

⁴⁷ For an account of the Party and the military during the Civil War up to the outbreak of the Second World War see John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001)., Francesco Benvenuti, *The Bolsheviks and the Red Army, 1918-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Mark von Hagen, *Solider in the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet Socialist State, 1917-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990)

and soldiers' time was better utilised learning new advanced weapons systems rather than going through further ideological training when he perceived little need for indoctrination by the 1950s.

Zhukov was molding the armed forces with a greater sense of military professionalism. There was increased professionalism in the military, along with a greater sense of pride. Military officers became public figures for the first time since the 1930s. From 1955 to 1957, thanks to Zhukov, the Soviet military was relatively free from oppressive Party domination.⁴⁸ While Zhukov was Minister of Defense, the military attempted to be non-Party; it had no intentions of being anti-Party. Zhukov wanted to create a strong modern military force above the fray of Party politics. After allowing officers to decide for themselves whether to attend political education classes, Zhukov dissolved the post of political officer (*zampolit*) at the company level. Zhukov also moved the *zampolit* at the battalion level to the regimental level. In May 1956, Zhukov “without the knowledge of the Party Central Committee issued orders which introduced bureaucratic rule in the management of Party organizations, set off commanders against political workers and spread unhealthy relations and disparity among them.”⁴⁹ However, that was written shortly after Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964 at a time when Kolkowicz did not have access to primary documents. The announcement, dated 8 May 1956, was signed by both Zhukov and Zheltov, the head of the GPU.⁵⁰ Zheltov, albeit a weaker personality, knew of the orders to the Party workers within the Soviet armed forces. Thus, the Party was well aware of Zhukov's machinations in curtailing the work of the GPU. Zhukov followed protocol. The GPU and the Party were well aware of his views of political work within the military. Perhaps that

⁴⁸ Kolkowicz, 121.

⁴⁹ Kolkowicz., 128.

⁵⁰ V. Naumov, editor, *Georgii Zhukov: stenogramma oktiabr'skogo (1957g.) plenuma TsK KPSS I drugie dokumenti* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii fond Demokratiia, 2001), 74-80.

was an instance of the Party acquiescence to a stronger military leader. If Zhukov was guilty of anything it was inculcating professionalism to the Soviet Armed Forces and trying to mold it along the model of contemporary, advanced armies of the time—armies that the Soviet Union might have to face one day in the battlefields of the next war.

By marginalizing the work of the political administration within the armed forces, Zhukov wanted to focus on military training and have the political workers focus only on education and morale building. He saw that political workers and officers went through military training enabling them better to complete their jobs of helping morale, discipline, and training. Zhukov was a strong-willed person, an advocate for the professional interests of the military, and a popular hero. He was a proponent of iron-willed discipline, the sharp separation of ranks (chain of command), and training. Under Zhukov, military training and preparedness was the primary task of officers; political activities were secondary.

Zhukov's desire to emphasize military strategy and training at the expense of political agitation was made necessary by the significance of newly applied military technologies. Throughout the 1950s, military technology was rapidly developing. To keep pace with those developments, the Soviet armed forces had to update strategic doctrines and tactics as discussed in the previous chapter. As Minister of Defense, Zhukov oversaw the development and implementation of a new strategic doctrine and military thought to incorporate the new technologies of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, coupled with ballistic rocketry. Throughout the 1950s there was no serious conflict between the military and the CPSU over strategy. The rise of Zhukov coincided with the beginning of new military thinking within the Soviet Union.⁵¹

⁵¹ David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 331.

Zhukov, along with Khrushchev, believed in the viability of new nuclear weapons. Zhukov, however, saw nuclear weapons as complements to traditional conventional armaments—soldiers and tanks still had a role to play on a nuclear battlefield.

Nuclear Battlefield: Military Exercises

In autumn 1953, field exercises were held in the Carpathian Military District to investigate “the methods of conducting combat operations in conditions in which the ‘enemy’ uses nuclear weapons.”⁵² The exercises were directed by Konev with Zhukov aiding in preparations and setting out specific goals of the operation. Nuclear scientist Igor Kurchatov and missile designer Sergei Korolev were present to act as consultants. During the exercises, a nuclear explosion was simulated. A year later in September 1954, an actual nuclear device was detonated during field exercises held in the South Urals Military District.⁵³

Near the village of Totskoe, in the Orenburg Province, 44,000 Soviet troops (armored as well as mechanized infantry) took part in the exercises. Under the command of General Ivan Petrov, those soldiers advanced on a position that had been bombed with a “medium-yield” nuclear bomb. The bomb was dropped on 14 September 1954 by a Tu-4 bomber. Tanks, trucks, and live animals had been sent into ground zero before the bombing. Covered trenches were situated 500 meters away and uncovered trenches 1.2-1.3 kilometres from the blast zone. An oak forest 1.5 kilometres away from the drop zone was destroyed by the explosion. Five minutes after the nuclear explosion, artillery opened fire on the position, and then 21 minutes later 86

⁵² Holloway, 325.

⁵³ Holloway, 326.

Il-28 light bombers made their runs. After 40 minutes, a radiation team was sent in to take measurements. Ground troops then made their assault on the ‘enemy’ position but were not allowed within 500 meters of ground zero. Tanks were melted or thrown hundreds of meters from the epicenter of the blast. While watching from a distance, Zhukov had his hat blown off his head by the shock wave of the blast.⁵⁴ After the exercise was completed, the troops returned to their barracks, received radiation checks, took showers, and donned new uniforms.⁵⁵ The exercise at Totskoe was hailed as a great success by the Soviet high command and illustrated that offensive operations were possible on a nuclear battlefield.

All who took part in the 1954 exercise were supposedly ordered to sign a silence agreement that lasted 25 years. By the late 1980s, officers and soldiers who were present at Totskoe had developed illnesses, including cancer. Nothing was done for these men who were exposed to high radiation levels in the 1950s.⁵⁶

The 1955 Field Regulations of the Soviet Army took into account the nuclear exercise carried out in the South Urals Military District in 1954. Zhukov and the Soviet high command, including the General Staff, formulated Soviet military strategy, but it had to be accepted by the political leadership—the CPSU. Coincidentally, the rise of Zhukov both in the military and in the decision-making institutions simplified the process of formulating and accepting strategic doctrines in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev and Zhukov agreed on the development of nuclear missiles into the strategy of the Soviet Armed Forces. However, while Khrushchev pushed for more resources to be spent on the development of and sole reliance on ballistic missiles, Zhukov

⁵⁴ Chaney, 394.

⁵⁵ Holloway, 327.

⁵⁶ Holloway, 328.

argued that missiles were needed, but not at the total exclusion of conventional forces. Even in the thermonuclear age “Soviet [doctrine] continue[d] to adhere essentially to the classical military strategic concept that the path to victory lies in the decisive defeat of the enemy’s armed forces.”⁵⁷

In 1955, Zhukov expounded his view of the new Soviet military thinking. He stated that, “one must bear in mind that one cannot win a war with atomic bombs alone.”⁵⁸ In 1956 he stated, “air power and nuclear weapons by themselves cannot determine the outcome of an armed conflict.”⁵⁹ According to Zhukov, the only way to win an armed conflict was by the combined efforts of all arms of the Soviet military in their coordinated usage. Even after his ouster from power, his dictums on strategy were upheld. On 25 November 1957, Marshal Rodion Malinovskii, the new Minister of Defense stated:

Considering that victory in combat will be achieved by the combined efforts of all arms and components of the armed forces, important significance is given in training to the organization of combined operations among the ground and airborne forces, aviation, the navy, rocket formations, and air defense forces, in the various forms of operations.⁶⁰

Thus during and after Zhukov’s tenure as Minister of Defence, Soviet strategic doctrine was based on the idea that large massed armies still held an integral role in a nuclear war. Even after a nuclear exchange, massed armies must engage one another on the battlefield to decide the outcome of such a war, especially to hold territory gained through nuclear exchange. While Zhukov agreed with Khrushchev that nuclear weapons must be folded into the Soviet Union’s

⁵⁷ Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), preface.

⁵⁸ Garthoff, 78.

⁵⁹ Garthoff, 78.

⁶⁰ Garthoff, 81

arsenal, he did still advocate for conventional weapons used in tandem with ever-developing new weapons technologies.

Another significant doctrinal development under Zhukov was the element of surprise in an armed conflict. In February 1955, Marshal of the Armored Forces Pavel Rotmistrov published an article in *Voennaya mysl'* stressing the need for preemption and surprise as an integral part of strategic thinking in the Soviet military.⁶¹ At the time Rotmistrov was teaching at the General Staff Academy. He wrote, “in the situation of the employment of atomic and hydrogen weapons, surprise is one of the decisive conditions for the attainment of success not only in the battles and operations but also in the war as a whole.”⁶²

Zhukov supported Khrushchev's calls for reductions in some of the conventional forces, even though Zhukov was simultaneously discussing strategic doctrines that involved the utilization of such forces. Zhukov did not oppose the initial cuts proposed by Khrushchev; he was removed from power before more drastic cuts were initiated by Khrushchev in the early 1960s [See Appendix B]. Reductions in 1955 paralleled the reorganization of the Soviet Ground Forces under Zhukov. In August 1955, the level of troops in the Soviet Army was 4,815,870.⁶³ In that month, 640,000 troops were supposed to be demobilized; in actuality only 300,000 were fully demobilized, and 300,000 were deactivated or assigned to lower strength units (*nekomplekt*).⁶⁴

⁶¹ Holloway, 331.

⁶² Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 146.

⁶³ “Zapiska G. Zhukova i V. Sokolovskogo v TsK KPSS o khode vypolneniya postanovleniya Soveta Ministro SSSR ot 12 Avgusta 1956g. o sokrashcheniya chislennosti Sovetskoi Armii i s predlozheniiami po dalneishemu sokrashcheniya Vooruzhenykh Sil SSSR, 9 fevralya 1956g,” *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii* (1993): 283.

⁶⁴ Matthew Evangelista, ““Why Keep Such an Army?” Khrushchev's Troop Reductions,” CWIHP Working Paper 19, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center, 5.

Zhukov and Khrushchev were not that far apart in their support for conventional arms reductions. Where the differences developed were over the ideas of re-training, salaries, retirements, and housing. Zhukov supported Khrushchev call for a leaner Soviet armed forces that would be significantly stronger based on nuclear weapons. Those were doctrinal and strategy concepts, which were the purview of the Party; thus, Zhukov supported the Party's military doctrine. It was when the Party crossed into the perceived purview of the military over training, small group tactics, but for Zhukov especially housing and retirements of demobilised soldiers. Zhukov believed officers should be given opportunities to re-train for their entrance into the non-military economy and officers who have served that state should be given housing in their retirement.

The reductions in conventional military armaments implemented by Khrushchev drastically affected the Soviet Navy, which was commanded by Admiral of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Kuznetsov.⁶⁵ In September 1955, Zhukov accompanied Khrushchev on an inspection tour of the Black Sea Fleet based at Sevastopol. A demonstration of developing naval weapon technologies, including prototypes of cruise missiles, was to be observed by Khrushchev and the Minister of Defense. The commander-in-chief of the Black Sea Fleet withheld the knowledge of such weapons from the ships' commanders. Both Khrushchev and Zhukov were dumbfounded as to why communications within the chain of command were so secretive. Zhukov laughed at the naval commanders, while Khrushchev burst into a tirade about the vulnerability of naval surface ships to cruise missiles. By October, the fleet was ready to demonstrate those new weapons to the leadership from Moscow. Despite a successful demonstration, Zhukov showed

⁶⁵ Just as Zhukov had fallen from grace under Stalin at the end of WWII, Admiral Kuznetsov suffered the same fate. He was then rehabilitated in the first years of the Khrushchev era. Today, like Khrushchev, Kuznetsov is buried in Novodevichy Cemetery and on his grave is engraved, "Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union."

nothing but contempt and disdain toward the Soviet Navy.⁶⁶ His attitude stemmed from his long-held view that the navy was inferior to the Soviet Army.

While in San Francisco on his trip to the US in September 1959, Khrushchev and his delegation toured the area on a boat ride of the San Francisco Bay. With Khrushchev was Henry Cabot Lodge, who was to report daily to the President on the progress of Khrushchev's visit.⁶⁷ As they rode the boat around San Francisco Bay a US Navy aircraft carrier entered the harbour. Khrushchev told Lodge that he felt sorry for the sailors on board the carrier because he hated to see good sailors serving on such a large vulnerable target.⁶⁸ Khrushchev preached on the ills and wastes of resources that large surface fleets are on both the US and USSR. No longer would aircraft carriers and battleships be the main naval workhorses of power. The future in naval power belonged to submarines. They were to be the naval weapons that would dominate the seas for decades to come. Khrushchev revealed to Cabot Lodge how the Soviet Union was turning their surface vessel fleet into scrap metal and was concentrating efforts on building submarines, submarines that were capable of firing nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. Cabot Lodge also learned from Khrushchev that Admiral Nikolai Kuznetsov had been demoted, and then dismissed from service to the U.S.S.R.⁶⁹ Khrushchev then went on a tirade about the efficacy of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. He lectured Lodge on the importance of these new weapons and how they made manned aircraft and other conventional weapons obsolete. Khrushchev divulged

⁶⁶ N.S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya- Vremya, Lyudi, Vlast'* vol. 4 (Moscow: Moskovskie Novosti, 1999), 178.

⁶⁷ Lodge was the US representative to the United Nations under Eisenhower until 1960. Prior to that he served as a US Senator from Massachusetts.

⁶⁸ Memorandum of Conversation: Khrushchev, Lodge, Sukhodrev, Akalovsky, Box 8, International Trips and Meetings Series, White House Office: Office of the Staff Secretary, DDE Library, Abilene, KS.

⁶⁹ Memorandum of Conversation: Khrushchev, Lodge, Sukhodrev, Akalovsky, Box 8, International Trips and Meetings Series, White House Office: Office of the Staff Secretary, DDE Library, Abilene, KS.

to Lodge that the Soviet Union had ICBMs with a range of 7,000 kilometers and could carry a five-megaton nuclear warhead.⁷⁰

Kuznetsov's career suffered harshly under Khrushchev and Zhukov. Zhukov told Kuznetsov and the Navy that he would "soon put [them] in Army boots."⁷¹ Soon he had his reason to get rid of Kuznetsov. On 29 October 1955, the battleship *Novorossiysk* exploded and sank in the Bay of Sevastopol killing 608 sailors. Kuznetsov took the blame for the *Novorossiysk* explosion. During a Presidium meeting on 16 November 1955, Khrushchev disgraced Kuznetsov, calling him a very dangerous man and a worthless commander.⁷² Kuznetsov was retired, but Zhukov went one step further and had him demoted in rank. Admiral Sergei Gorshkov replaced Kuznetsov. At that juncture, Gorshkov was a strong advocate of submarines over the building and maintenance of a large surface fleet. His thinking was thus similar to Khrushchev's.

Zhukov, understanding his boss's position regarding a surface navy, still lobbied strongly for the retention of surface ships, predominately for aircraft carriers, alongside the development of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines. Zhukov argued for a diversified navy, arguing before the Presidium that the Soviet Union needed "floating bases."⁷³ His support for retaining a surface fleet was brought as evidence against him during the Central Committee plenum in October 1957.

⁷⁰ Memorandum of Conversation: Khrushchev, Lodge, Sukhodrev, Akalovsky, Box 8, International Trips and Meetings Series, White House Office: Office of the Staff Secretary, DDE Library, Abilene, KS.

⁷¹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 76.

⁷² Protocol 169, 16 November 1955. *Arkhivii Kremlya: Prezidium TsK KPSS, 1954-1964, Tom. 1, Chernovie protokol'nie zapisi zasedani; stenogrammi*, editor-in-chief Aleksandr Fursenko (Moscow; Rosspen, 2004), 63.

⁷³ Protocol 176, 24 December 1955. *Arkhivii Kremlya*, 75.

Zhukov in the Cold War

The period from 1955 to 1957 was a tumultuous time in the Cold War. Although crises erupted within the Soviet bloc as well as in the Middle East, both the Soviet Union and the United States believed peace and concessions from both sides of the Iron Curtain were within reach. Peaceful coexistence and disarmament were perceived as goals attainable in the very near future. Khrushchev strongly thought Stalin and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, mismanaged Soviet foreign policy in the early years of the Cold War. Stalin and Molotov pushed for confrontation with the West, which Khrushchev adamantly viewed as a perversion of foreign policy objectives. ‘Nikita Khrushchev believed that with his new power came a responsibility to undertake a revolution in Soviet foreign policy.’⁷⁴ Khrushchev adhered to the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence. For Khrushchev, peaceful coexistence with the capitalist West was not simply a pragmatic solution to the spiraling arms race of the Cold War, but an ideologically sound decision based on the ideas of his role model—Lenin.⁷⁵

In Khrushchev’s mind, Zhukov was the perfect representative and ally for his program to revolutionize Soviet foreign policy due to Khrushchev assumption that the military leaders popularity with the Soviet citizenry would be a benefit to the Party and to the government. Enlisted by Khrushchev in the drive to facilitate better relations with Tito’s Yugoslavia, Zhukov wrote an article published in *Pravda* on the 10th anniversary of the defeat of Hitler’s Germany.

⁷⁴ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War: The Inside Story of An American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 22.

⁷⁵ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, 23.

The article praised the sacrifices of Tito in the fight against Hitler. A week earlier Zhukov had been asked by Khrushchev to give a speech during the May Day celebrations. In his speech Zhukov stated that, “the foreign policy of the Soviet Union proceeds from the wise counsel of the Great Lenin of the possibility of peaceful coexistence and economic competition of states, irrespective of their social or state structure.”⁷⁶

Khrushchev brought Zhukov on board as an ally in the drive for détente with the West and a disarmament agreement with the United States. Zhukov traveled as part of the Soviet delegation to the Geneva Summit in July 1955. Khrushchev and the Party leadership hoped Zhukov’s friendship with Dwight Eisenhower, now President, could convey the true Soviet position during private, friendly discussions among the old warriors.

President Eisenhower met privately with Defense Minister Zhukov on 20 July 1955. Zhukov told his friend that he feared “dark forces were undermining Soviet-American relations.”⁷⁷ He reiterated to Eisenhower that the Soviets wanted peace with the West and were not looking for war. The armed forces of the Soviet Union were kept at the ready and a large conventional force was maintained in East-Central Europe for the reason that the Soviets feared a surprise attack by the stronger NATO alliance. As articulated by Zhukov, that statement was to explain the military policy of the Soviet Union to Eisenhower. Zhukov wanted to communicate to Eisenhower that the Soviets wanted relief from the military standoff of the Cold War. Both men knew that following their current policies was economically irrational.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, 28.

⁷⁷ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, 44.

⁷⁸ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, 45.

At that point in their meeting on 20 July, Eisenhower approached his military equal on his proposed 'Open Skies' program, whereby Soviet and American territories were to be opened to over flights by the opposite superpower to facilitate an inspection regime of the military capabilities of each state. According to Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, Zhukov responded positively to Eisenhower's proposed inspection scheme. Zhukov stated that the scheme was politically viable in the Soviet Union, saying to Eisenhower, 'it would be entirely possible and while its detail should be studied, he [Zhukov] was, in principle, in full agreement with the President's remarks.'⁷⁹ Upon welcoming Eisenhower to Geneva on behalf of Khrushchev and Bulganin, along with the Soviet people, Zhukov conveyed to Eisenhower that the ideas of understanding were of utmost importance in the relationship between the USA and the Soviet Union, and those ideas 'were understood in the Soviet Union.'⁸⁰

From 'Open Skies' the conversation turned to the volatility of a world permeated with nuclear weapons. As military men, Zhukov and Eisenhower understood the destructive power of nuclear weapons. They had both witnessed the ever strengthening power of nuclear weapons during numerous tests carried out by each state. Both agreed that nuclear weapons left the world destabilized owing to the power the weapons could bring to bear in a short span of time. A few hundred weapons launched by each side would affect not just the United States and the Soviet Union but the entire Northern hemisphere if not the world at large.⁸¹ Eisenhower was told by

⁷⁹ Memorandum of the Conversation at the President's Luncheon, President's Villa Geneva, July 20, 1955, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office), 412-413. See also *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 11, "zapis' besedi G.K. Zhukova c prezidentom SSHA Eizenhauerom," 37.

⁸⁰ *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 11, "zapis' besedi G.K. Zhukova c prezidentom SSHA Eizenhauerom," 37.

⁸¹ David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*...341.

Zhukov during their private meeting that he, Zhukov, was “unqualifiedly for the total abolition of weapons of this character.”⁸²

During his discussions with Eisenhower, Zhukov spoke on his own behalf. He did not speak on behalf of the CPSU or Khrushchev. Friction increased between the leader of the CPSU and the Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev was against Eisenhower’s ‘Open Skies’ proposal. Khrushchev wondered if transparency between the Soviet Union and the United States increased or decreased the threat of a US first strike. If the US knew Soviet military capabilities, or lack thereof, would they mount a first strike to cripple the entire Soviet military infrastructure? Zhukov’s support of Eisenhower’s inspection scheme was later leveled against him as evidence of foreign policy adventurism during the October 1957 Central Committee plenum, which removed him from all military posts and Party positions.

Why did Zhukov speak so candidly at Geneva on ‘Open Skies’ and nuclear disarmament? Militarily, the Soviet Union was in a weakened position in comparison with the United States of America. Moreover, however, the situation was a closely guarded secret. As of 1955, the United States intelligence services were unknowingly overestimating the capabilities of the Soviet bloc. To open Soviet airspace to US intelligence would have blown the top off the pot. Secrecy was of the utmost importance if the Soviets were to attempt to negotiate its foreign policy objectives from a perceived position of strength. That was an ideological reason for the Soviet rejection of Eisenhower’s inspection scheme. Zhukov, in his capacity of the Minister Defense, took a more pragmatic approach to Eisenhower’s proposal. Lacking definitive intelligence on American military posture, Zhukov supported ‘Open Skies’ to fill the gaps in Soviet intelligence on its

⁸² Memorandum of the Conversation..., *Foreign Relations of the United States*, *op. cit.*

greatest enemy. What the Soviets lacked in technology, the marshal hoped he could make up for with a pragmatic solution, such as the open intelligence flights over US military installations specifically called for in Eisenhower's plan.⁸³ While Khrushchev took a dogmatic, ideological view in his refusal of any proposal that would open Soviet territory to American inspection, Marshal Zhukov believed a pragmatic approach in supporting the program would have a positive impact on the knowledge gaps in Soviet intelligence of American military capabilities.

Coupled with support for the 'Open Skies' proposal was Zhukov's stance on the need for disarmament. Both positions were required due to Soviet inability to produce enough strategic information on American/Western military capabilities. Zhukov believed diplomacy, through disarmament talks, might shed light on those capabilities, which were represented as intelligence gaps. "Under the leadership of Marshal Zhukov, the Soviet military staked out a very pro-disarmament position" based on the need for strategic intelligence, which could not be provided by the GRU or any other intelligence service in the Soviet Union.⁸⁴ Acquiescing to Marshal Zhukov's rationale, Khrushchev allowed Soviet delegates at the disarmament talks in London in November 1956 to offer a plan for limited aerial surveillance. The plan allowed for partial surveillance of sixteen hundred kilometers from Paris to the Soviet-Polish border.⁸⁵ Zhukov and the military hoped that the next round of disarmament talks might extend the coverage area of such a plan. Despite the initial acquiescence to Zhukov and the military establishment, Khrushchev was wary of any policy that would legally put American reconnaissance aircraft

⁸³ The Soviets lacked intelligence gathering technology such as the American U-2 spy plane developed by Lockheed Martin, which took its maiden test flight in August 1955, a month after the Geneva Summit. In 1957, the U-2 went into active service of the Central Intelligence Agency.

⁸⁴ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*...143-144.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *United States Participation in the United Nations: Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1957* (Washington, DC; Government Printing Office 1958), 17.

over the sovereign territory of the Soviet Union. The emphasis must be placed on the legality of plans such as 'Open Skies' and those discussed in the disarmament talks in London. In just a few short years, the United States would begin U-2 intelligence gathering flights over Soviet military installations in the direct violation of Soviet territorial sovereignty.

Zhukov's support of these specific foreign policy initiatives was again leveled against him during his indictment in November 1957. Zhukov staunchly defended his belief that disarmament was a key policy to facilitate peaceful relations with the West as well as pragmatically to fulfill the Soviet military's intelligence requirements. Zhukov, despite holding the highest military position within the Soviet hierarchy, was willing to open up key military territory to American planes for inspection if the act was reciprocated by the United States and NATO. He knew the Soviets had to be willing to pay a price to gain intelligence on the United States military.⁸⁶

Statements on peaceful coexistence, relations with Yugoslavia, support for disarmament, and the 'Open Skies' proposal all illustrate Zhukov's influence during the Cold War. Zhukov's foray into Cold War politics was two dimensional. Khrushchev purposely used the patriotic Zhukov to convey a message of strength and ideology to the citizens of the Soviet Union about the need to solidify relations with all socialist countries. Zhukov was a prime spokesman for Khrushchev's policies against those proposed by Malenkov and Molotov. Zhukov's second dimension was one of *realpolitik*. It was out of a sense of *realpolitik* that Zhukov actively supported President Eisenhower's 'Open Skies' proposal and pushed for an integral agreement on superpower disarmament. In Zhukov's mind, both policy initiatives would have

⁸⁶ Protocol 121, 26 October 1957, *Archivii Kremlya*, 277-279.

pragmatically solved a problem of Soviet intelligence gaps concerning US military capabilities. These examples stated above show that any study of Zhukov is intertwined in the extensive history— political, social, military, and diplomatic—of the Cold War.

Poland and Hungary 1956

Zhukov was instrumental in bringing change and fresh thinking into Soviet strategic doctrine. He viewed nuclear weapons as additions to the Soviet arsenal, but Zhukov believed that the only way of winning a future war was with combined arms and not reliance on nuclear weapons. As Minister of Defense, Zhukov modernized the Soviet military, a military that was used on only one occasion in combat while he was in power. Zhukov was at the forefront of military decision-making during the Hungarian uprising in the autumn of 1956.

After Khrushchev's Secret Speech at the Twentieth Party Congress, the policy of de-Stalinization spread to the peoples' democracies of Eastern Europe.⁸⁷ Uprisings in Poland were peacefully settled politically by the Poles and the Soviets. Zhukov had begun planning for the use of Soviet forces in Poland. Zhukov and Bulganin had been sent to Warsaw for the Seventh Plenum of the Polish Communist Party during July 1956, but neither was admitted to the meetings. In October, Zhukov supposedly traveled to Leningrad, the headquarters of the Soviet Northern Group of Forces, to plan a possible move on Warsaw. It is more likely that he was still in Moscow planning from the Ministry of Defense.⁸⁸ When the Polish problem was resolved,

⁸⁷ At the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU, Marshal Zhukov was elected as a candidate, non-voting, member of the Presidium of the Central Committee.

⁸⁸ Chaney, 406.

Zhukov, along with Shepilov as Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed the treaty maintaining Soviet troops stationed in Poland.⁸⁹ Poland was kept within the Soviet sphere of influence as well as within the Warsaw Treaty Organization. With Gomulka returned to head the Polish Communist Party, relations with the Soviet Union improved. An amicable political solution was not found, however, when the revolt began in Hungary in the same year.

On 21 October 1956, the CPSU Central Committee Plenum decided to “refrain from military intervention” in Hungary.⁹⁰ Throughout the next days, a unanimous decision could not be found for the use of Soviet military force against Budapest. Mikhail Suslov, Anastas Mikoyan, and Ivan Serov were sent to Budapest to appraise the situation. On 23 October Khrushchev ordered Zhukov to use Soviet troops stationed in Hungary to occupy key sites in Budapest and to close off the border with Austria.⁹¹ At the meeting of the Presidium that day, Zhukov appraised those present on demonstrations in Budapest. Considering Vladimir Malin’s notes, it is possible that Zhukov delivered the situational report to the Presidium. Zhukov told of 100,000 protestors in Budapest and that the radio station had been set on fire.⁹² Mikhail Pervukhin supported the Presidium in sending an increased number of troops to Hungary. Following Pervukhin, Zhukov stated that the situation in Hungary was “indeed different” from Poland. “Troops must be sent. One of the members of the CC Plenum should travel there.

⁸⁹ Shepilov was Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union at the time.

⁹⁰ Mark Kramer, “New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian Crises,” *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9. Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center, 12.

⁹¹ Kramer, 12. The Soviet General Staff had brought Soviet forces in Hungary to full combat alert during 19-21 October 1956. Zhukov gave the final order, given to him by the Presidium, for troops to move against Budapest.

⁹² Document No. 25: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium, October 23, 1956, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A History in Documents*, editors Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, and János Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), 217-218.

Martial law should be declared in the country, and a curfew introduced.’⁹³ All Presidium members concurred that troops should be sent to Budapest. By 11:00 that night, 31,550 soldiers, and 1,130 tanks and personnel carriers arrived in Budapest from Soviet garrisons in Hungary.⁹⁴ Troops of the MVD were also sent into Hungary. The 128th MVD Infantry division and the 39th MVD Mechanised division were sent to positions near Chop, Beregovo, and Vulok.⁹⁵ Despite that show of force, Soviet forces faced a quagmire in Budapest; the military and political situations were quickly deteriorating.

All the while, Zhukov and other Presidium members supported Mikoyan against Molotov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov in their calls for stronger responses (both military and political) to Budapest’s leadership. Zhukov was clear headed and knew political avenues had to be explored before a military response was implemented. By the end of October, Zhukov was willing to withdraw all Soviet forces from Hungary to solve the crisis.⁹⁶ Confusion reigned within the Presidium in the meeting on 28 October 1956. As he voiced his backing of Mikoyan, Zhukov supported what he called “political flexibility,” while at the same time preparing for the suppression of any demonstrations.⁹⁷ Zhukov advocated support for Nagy’s new government. The question of withdrawing Soviet forces was up for discussion. In Budapest and certain

⁹³ Document No. 25: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium, October 23, 1956.

⁹⁴ Dokladnaya zapiska G.K. Zhukova i V.D. Sokolovskogo v TsK KPSS o vvode sovetskikh voisk na territoriu VNR, in *Georgii Zhukov, stenogramma oktyabrskogo (1957g) plenuma TsK KPSS i drygie dokumenty*, editor V. Naumov (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii Fond ‘Demokratiia’, 2001), 106-107.

⁹⁵ GARF, f. 89, opis, 45, delo 7. Hoover Institution Archives

⁹⁶ Kramer, 14.

⁹⁷ Document No. 40: Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session, October 28, 1956. *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A History in Documents*.

regions of the country, Zhukov advocated returning Soviet forces to their garrisons albeit at a constant state of readiness.⁹⁸

Zhukov's mood quickly changed when Imre Nagy called for Hungary to withdraw from the Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact).⁹⁹ That was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back for the Kremlin leadership. Mikoyan and Suslov requested that Konev be sent to Hungary immediately.¹⁰⁰ A deteriorating political situation coupled with helpless Party organs worsened the situation in Budapest. Repeating the request for Konev, Mikoyan and Suslov relayed to Moscow the difficult relationship between commanding officers of the Hungarian army and its Soviet counterpart.¹⁰¹ At the Presidium meeting on 30 October, Zhukov supported Konev's dispatch to Budapest post haste. Zhukov detailed military planning already taking place for transportation of troops and described Nagy as playing a double game against Moscow.¹⁰² "With regard to troops in the GDR and in Poland, the questions is more serious. It must be considered at the Consultative Council [Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact]." Allies within the Warsaw Pact were to be consulted before any movement of troops toward Hungary from a third country.¹⁰³ On 31 October, an emergency meeting of the Soviet Presidium voted for a full scale invasion of Budapest, and other key cities in Hungary. Moscow did not

⁹⁸ Document No. 40: Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session, October 28, 1956, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A History in Documents*.

⁹⁹ Zhukov's mood change was in concert with the rest of the Presidium members. All agreed that Nagy's call for Hungary to withdraw from the WTO was the last straw and intervention was the only option available thereafter.

¹⁰⁰ GARF, f. 89, opis 45, delo 12. Hoover Institution Archives

¹⁰¹ GARF, f. 89, opis 45, delo 12. Hoover Institution Archives

¹⁰² Document No. 49: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on October 30, 1956, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A History in Documents*.

¹⁰³ Document No. 49: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on October 30, 1956, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A History in Documents*.

want to see similar actions taken in other East European satellites; Hungarian actions were not to spill over into the other people's democracies. On 1 November, Konev was appointed supreme commander of all Soviet forces in Hungary, and the invasion began three days later. Within days of the invasion, the Soviets had achieved their purposes and installed a Soviet-friendly regime in Budapest.¹⁰⁴

From the documents cited above a picture develops of Zhukov's involvement in Khrushchev's Presidium. Although only a candidate member, Zhukov acted as a voice of moderation. He acted as the military's voice on the Presidium, providing information necessary for any resolutions, but also acting on directives from the Presidium. Over the course of October-November 1956, Zhukov had not forced opinions on the Presidium. In consultation with other members, Zhukov came to consensual decisions based on accurate information. When military action had to be taken, Zhukov was supportive of that decision and carried out orders from the Presidium.

Zhukov, the Military and the Anti-Party Group

Zhukov's career was reaching a zenith in 1956. He was a full member of the Central Committee and a candidate member in the Presidium. He and Khrushchev were congenial with one another, each supporting the other in terms of military policies and strategy. In April 1957, Zhukov and Khrushchev compromised once again. This time it was over political organizations within the Soviet Army and Navy. The Central Committee approved the "Instructions to CPSU

¹⁰⁴ "Zhukov Report on the situation in Hungary as of 12 noon, 4 November 1956," CWIHP Virtual Archive, TsKhSD, f. 89, o. 45, d. 23.

Organizations in the Soviet Army and Navy.”¹⁰⁵ Those “Instructions...” were a compromise between Zhukov’s wishes for a professional military devoid of political interference and the Party’s desire for political control over the military. Military commanders were given responsibility for military as well as political training. The “Instructions...” also stated “criticism of the orders and edicts of commanders will not be permitted at Party meetings.”¹⁰⁶ The past practice of *kritika* and *samokritika* by military officers and the soldiers under their command was no longer allowed. These practices allowed for other soldiers and officers to criticize commanding officers at Party meetings. Officers were also expected to practice self-criticism (*samokritika*) in these meetings. Zhukov had always questioned the need for these practices, since the majority of officers were members of the CPSU and not the military specialists used during the Civil War. It seemed with the “Instructions...” in April 1957, the Zhukov-Khrushchev political alliance was firmly established. However, it was about to be tested in the coming summer months when ardent Stalinists— Molotov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov— moved within the Presidium to oust Khrushchev from his position at the head of the Party.

Sergei Khrushchev believes that if the Anti-Party Group would not have moved against his father in July 1957, Khrushchev would have acted differently towards Zhukov in the months following the June Plenum of the Central Committee. Sergei Khrushchev has respect for Zhukov and believed that his father was mistaken in the case against him.¹⁰⁷ The Anti-Party

¹⁰⁵ Chaney, 422. In March 1957, Zhukov spoke to the first post-war Soviet Armed Forces Conference held in Moscow. He praised the Party and attacked Western aggression recently displayed during the Suez Crisis. He stressed the need for the military and Soviet state to defend against nuclear weapons, both strategic and tactical, and stressed that the Soviet Armed Forces must have the capability for a counter-strike with its own nuclear arsenal.

¹⁰⁶ Chaney, 422.

¹⁰⁷ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev...*, 253.

Group, of which Molotov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov were the driving forces, moved in June 1957 to remove Khrushchev from his position as First Secretary of the CPSU; they perhaps would have made him Minister for Agriculture, but that is not certain. The move came in the Presidium; however, Khrushchev stated personnel changes were purely the prerogative of the Central Committee. Thus, the decision had to be made by the plenum of the Central Committee. Khrushchev was a sly politician and knew that the majority of the Central Committee owed their position to his patronage. As a candidate member in the Presidium, Zhukov was present at the meetings as the Anti-Party Group began their move. Zhukov personally knew most of the Anti-Party Group, especially Marshal Voroshilov. He knew all were cronies of Stalin and longed for a return to more 'stable' means of ruling the Party. Zhukov was not about to support those who caused the military grief and heartache during the purges of the late 1930s. The Anti-Party Group, however, knew Zhukov's strong position within the military and the strong feelings Soviet citizens had for one of their most favored sons. If Zhukov had been co-opted to support the Anti-Party Group, he might have been able to garner support for Molotov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov from the whole of Soviet society. The hero of the Great Patriotic War was a formidable ally to have on one's side. Khrushchev knew this as well. He used Zhukov's support to his own advantage.

Central Committee members in Moscow who were loyal to Khrushchev moved to stop what was happening in the Presidium and called for a plenum of the Central Committee. After wrangling among members of the Central Committee and the Presidium, a plenum was called for

late June. Along with Serov, head of the KGB, Zhukov was able to use military aircraft to bring a majority of the members of the Central Committee back to Moscow.¹⁰⁸

From 22 to 29 June 1956 a Plenum of the CC was held to discuss the Anti-Party Group. The Plenum removed Kaganovich, Molotov, and Malenkov from the Presidium. They were sent out of Moscow.¹⁰⁹ After the Plenum, *Pravda* published articles concerning the unshakable unity of the Party.¹¹⁰ Speaking at the Plenum, Zhukov attacked the Anti-Party Group for their attempt to reverse the gains of the Twentieth Party Congress and for their non-Leninist ways.¹¹¹ The CC had the authority to control appointments within the Party apparatus. The Presidium did not have that authority. Zhukov voiced those views at the Plenum, which were echoed by the majority of the CC members present who supported Khrushchev.¹¹² The Plenum reassured Soviet society that the gains of the Twentieth Party Congress would not be reversed. Leninist principles were to be followed.¹¹³

For his support of Khrushchev throughout the summer, Zhukov was made a full member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, Zhukov became the first professional military officer to attain such a high position within the CPSU leadership. Zhukov was rewarded for his support,

¹⁰⁸ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev...*, 239. As head of the KGB, Serov was able to 'watch' and observe members of the Anti-Party Group and report on their discussions and movements to Khrushchev. The head of the KGB was a strong ally just as was the military.

¹⁰⁹ Kaganovich was sent to manage a cement plant, Molotov became Soviet ambassador to Mongolia, and Malenkov was sent to a collective farm administrative office.

¹¹⁰ "Nepokolebimoe edinstvo," *Pravda* 184 (3 July 1957): 1. See also "Postanovlenie Plenuma TsK KPSS, ob antipartii gruppe Malenova G.M., Kaganovicha L.M., Molotova V.M.," *Pravda* 185 (4 July 1957): 1-2.

¹¹¹ Vistuplenie G.K. Zhukova na iyun'skom (1957 g.) plenum TsK KPSS, *Georgii Zhukov, stenogramma oktiabrskogo (1957 g.) plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty*, editor V. Naumov (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii Fond 'Demokratiia', 2001), 153-161.

¹¹² Vistuplenie G.K. Zhukova na iyun'skom (1957 g.) plenum TsK KPSS.

¹¹³ "Nepokolebimoe edinstvo," *Pravda* 184 (3 July 1957): 1. See also "Postanovlenie Plenuma TsK KPSS, ob antipartii gruppe Malenova G.M., Kaganovicha L.M., Molotova V.M.," *Pravda* 185 (4 July 1957): 1-2.

but he did not play the vital role in Khrushchev's victory. Zhukov was used by Khrushchev. Khrushchev knew Zhukov and the political capital that Zhukov brought. A popular hero with Soviet citizens, and the military, Zhukov commanded respect and reverence. Zhukov was essentially a point man for Khrushchev. Along with a majority of the Central Committee supporting him, Khrushchev had the support of Serov and the whole of the KGB. With the KGB, Khrushchev was able to listen and spy on the Anti-Party Group. This was a greater asset to Khrushchev than the air transport provided by Zhukov. The majority of the Central Committee ensured that the Presidium would not take any action without its consent. Zhukov was alleged to have said that no tanks or soldiers would move without his command. That statement, if made, was said to the Anti-Party Group, who were hoping the army rank-and-file, including divisional commanders, would support the Presidium's decision, rather than taking a direct preemptive action against the Anti-Party Group.¹¹⁴ Anastas Mikoyan remembered that Zhukov said no tanks would move without his orders. Mikoyan stated that this referred to Saburov, a member of the Anti-Party Group, saying that tanks were moving to surround the Kremlin. Zhukov made the statement to refute Saburov. This version of the incident has been supported by Viktor Grishin, member of the Central Committee, and also by Khrushchev's son, Sergei. Khrushchev believed that Zhukov was important in defeating Molotov and other members of the Anti-Party Group. In his memoirs Khrushchev wrote: "Thanks largely to [Zhukov], the military took an active stand [by standing down] against the Anti-Party Group..."¹¹⁵ Zhukov was thus a strong ally for Khrushchev to have, but he did not by himself

¹¹⁴ Brian Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations 1689-2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 183.

¹¹⁵ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (London: Andre Duetsch, 1974), 14.

decide the outcome of the leadership struggle in the summer 1957. Zhukov's support was not the sole determinant in Khrushchev's victory in the leadership challenge of summer 1957.

By the end of the summer the Zhukov-Khrushchev alliance had reached its zenith. Several times after the June plenum, Zhukov visited the Khrushchev dacha outside Moscow, strolling around the surrounding grounds talking as close friends. Little did Zhukov know that after the June Plenum, Khrushchev became increasingly wary of him. Khrushchev used Serov and the KGB to eavesdrop on Zhukov and follow his movements. Zhukov and Khrushchev's alliance of convenient necessity was about to be severed.

Zhukov's Fall and Retirement, 1957-1974

In 1957 Zhukov was at the pinnacle of his military and political career. Zhukov had traveled earlier in 1957, along with Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, to Bucharest for the signing of the Soviet-Romanian agreement on the legal status of Soviet Forces stationed in Romanian territory. Zhukov performed a similar service in May when he traveled with Gromyko to Hungary. Gromyko noticed in conversations with Zhukov that the Marshal spoke of the victory over Germany due to the soldiers, officers, and the Soviet people. Gromyko noted that he failed to mention the contributions of the Party.¹¹⁶ Above all else, the Party must be mentioned first. In Soviet history and ideology, it was the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that brought victory for the Soviet state.

¹¹⁶ A.A. Gromyko, "Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov," in *Marshal Zhukov: Polkovodets i Chelovek* vol. 2. eds. A.D. Mirkina and B.S. Yarovikov (Moscow: Novosti, 1988), 13. Zhukov also traveled to India in 1957 on an official state visit. On that visit he reviewed and inspected the Indian Armed Forces; Zhukov also renewed an offer of a Soviet arms deal on the orders of the Party leadership.

Shortly after the June Plenum, that had removed the Anti-Party Group, Zhukov attended the military exercises held in the Belorussian Military District. Zhukov was in Belorussia from June to August 1957. During Zhukov's absence from Moscow, a Lieutenant General Pronin, Deputy Commander of the Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy, spoke to a working plenum of the Party *aktiv* in the military claiming that Marshal Zhukov worked against the Leninist principles of the Party.¹¹⁷

The accusations made against Zhukov by Pronin were not entirely baseless. After the June Plenum, the Soviet military under Zhukov made three demands of the Party. First, the GPU was to report directly to the Ministry of Defense, not the Central Committee. Second, the military was to be represented in the secret police leadership and assume command of the Internal Security troops and border guards. Finally, the Party was formally to denounce the military purges of the 1930s under Stalin, including the removal and execution of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevskii. The rehabilitation of officers purged by Stalin in the 1930s was a point of Khrushchev's Secret Speech; nonetheless, when Zhukov raised the issue it was a charge leveled against him. Zhukov pushed for a greater professional military without the vestiges of a political-Party yoke around the Soviet Armed Forces. However, any attempt to limit or remove the Central Committee's control over the military through the GPU was akin to political suicide for Soviet officers who advocated it. Zhukov's relationship with Khrushchev grew even more tenuous.

According to Vladimir Karpov, a veteran of Stalingrad and Russian historian, Marshal Zhukov left aboard the *Kuibyshev* for Yugoslavia while the "executioner's pistols were aimed at

¹¹⁷ C.P. Markov, "Poslevoennye Gody," *Marshal Zhukov: Polkovodets i Chelovek* vol. 2 eds. A.D. Mirkina and B.S. Yarovikov (Moscow: Novosti, 1988), 29.

him.”¹¹⁸ While Zhukov was in Yugoslavia, the cogs of the Soviet political system started turning. His trip was extended to allow him to visit Albania. Khrushchev and his associates needed to keep Zhukov out of Moscow to develop the case against him. The military leadership was divided. There were those who supported Zhukov, such as Rokossovskii, in his policies and goals of curtailing the Party control over the military. Then there were those marshals and officers, such as Konev, Moskalenko, and Malinovskii who were Khrushchev’s allies in the Soviet high command. These were men who were Front and Army commanders at the battle of Stalingrad, where Khrushchev had held the rank of Lieutenant-General and had been the political officer who served with many of these officers.¹¹⁹ As was argued in chapter one, these officers were not necessarily outwardly pro-Khrushchev, but were primarily driven by a strong disdain for Zhukov and his leadership style. Khrushchev shrewdly used past animosity between Zhukov and those officers who served as Front and Army commanders during the war. Khrushchev used military leaders who owed their rank and past and future promotions to him, not Zhukov.¹²⁰ At a meeting of the Presidium, however, held on 19 October 1957 to discuss Zhukov, both

¹¹⁸ Vladimir Karpov, “Tainaya Rasprava nad Marshalom Zhukovym,” *Pravda* 197 (17 August 1991): 4. While in Yugoslavia, Zhukov met with Josip Broz Tito and Yugoslav Defense Minister Ivan Goshniak.

¹¹⁹ The so-called Stalingrad Group was to become dominant in the Soviet High Command throughout the 1950s and 1960s, especially after Zhukov’s removal from military and Party posts. Animosity between Stalingrad Front and Army commanders and Stavka representatives, such as Zhukov and Vasilevskii, was strong. Both groups claimed sole credit for the strategic plan for the breakout and counter-offensive against the Germans at Stalingrad. Front commander at Stalingrad was Colonel-General Yeremenko; Army commanders were Lieutenant-Generals Chuikov, Malinovskii and Moskalenko. Major General Biryuzov was Chief of Staff under Malinovskii; Chuikov’s Chief of Staff was Major General Krylov. Other officers commanding troops at Stalingrad were Rokossovskii, Batov, Bagramyan, Golikov, and Popov.

¹²⁰ On 22-23 October 1957, CPSU members of the Moscow garrison and Moscow Military district held a meeting concerning political work within the Soviet Armed Forces. Present at the meeting were First Secretary Khrushchev and head of the GPU, Zheltov. Both Khrushchev and Zheltov made scathing remarks to that meeting of Party members attacking Zhukov and his so-called anti-Party stance. Among Zhukov’s sins mentioned were his attempt to foster his own cult of personality and Bonapartism. *n.b.* I rather like Robert Service’s translation – cult of the individual rather than cult of the personality, Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 2004).

Malinovskii and Konev attacked Zheltov, arguing that the head of the GPU was going after Zhukov only to settle personal scores.¹²¹

Zhukov was recalled from his trip abroad, met at the airport by Konev and others, and quickly taken to a meeting of the Party Central Committee. His removal from power was a *fait accompli*.¹²² Before his return, it was reported that Zhukov had been replaced as Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union by Marshal Rodion Malinovskii.¹²³ According to Sergei Khrushchev, Zhukov called Khrushchev for an explanation while abroad when he read of his replacement as Minister of Defense.¹²⁴ In the absence of any evidence of this discussion, Khrushchev probably said an explanation was forthcoming when Zhukov returned to Moscow.

On 28-29 October 1957, a Central Committee plenum was convened in Moscow. The only question to be discussed at the plenum was “about the improvement of party-political work in the Soviet Army and Navy.”¹²⁵ In reality, Zhukov’s removal was the only agenda item for the plenum to discuss. Zhukov was to sit through the plenum listening as military officers and Party officials castigated him for his so-called anti-Party, Bonapartist tendencies. In 1962, *Voennaya mysl’* published an article concerning the October 1957 plenum. It stated that:

The resolution “On Improving Party and Political Work in the Soviet Armed Forces and Fleet” adopted by the October 1957 plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU played a great role in further enhancing the armed forces. The plenum firmly condemned the antiparty activity of former Minister of Defense G.K. Zhukov, who spread the cult of his personality, violated Lenin’s principles on directing the armed forces, pursued a policy of curtailing the work of the party

¹²¹ Taylor, 188.

¹²² Kolkowicz, 253.

¹²³ Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 177. Zhukov was replaced on 26 October 1957 by Malinovskii.

¹²⁴ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev...*, 250.

¹²⁵ Karpov, “Tainaya Rasprava...”

organizations, political bodies, and military councils, and of nullifying the guidance of and control over the army and navy by the Party, the Central Committee, and the Soviet state.¹²⁶

The main accusation against Zhukov in 1957 was his work against Party controls over the military and Party work in the Soviet Armed Forces. Other charges included policy adventurism, creating a personality cult within the military, personal crudeness/rudeness, and Bonapartist aspirations for power.¹²⁷ Mikhail Suslov, head of the Central Committee ideology and propaganda organs, delivered the initial assault against Zhukov. Suslov concentrated on Zhukov's "serious deficiencies and perversions in party-political work."¹²⁸

According to Colton, the October Central Committee plenum was "a public indictment that amounted to a bill of high treason."¹²⁹ Suslov attacked Zhukov for his failure to follow the Leninist principles of the Party. Suslov insisted that Zhukov had breached Party discipline and the principles of Leninist leadership of the Ministry of Defense and the Soviet Armed Forces.¹³⁰ Suslov castigated Zhukov for creating his own cult of the personality within the Soviet Armed Forces. Iconic images of Zhukov in the Museum of the Soviet Army were used as evidence of such a cult of personality. Marshal Timoshenko expanded on those accusations. While supporting Khrushchev's push against Stalin's cult of personality and power, Timoshenko asserted that Zhukov cultivated his own within the country and the military.¹³¹ As Karpov states,

¹²⁶ "Leninskii Kurs XXII syezda KPSS," *Voennaya mysl'* 4 (1962): 13.

¹²⁷ Colton, 178-188. Leaving out the accusation of Bonapartism, those same charges were leveled against Khrushchev in 1964.

¹²⁸ Karpov, "Tainaya Rasprava..."

¹²⁹ Timothy Colton, "The Zhukov Affair Reconsidered," *Soviet Studies* 29, no. 2 (April 1977): 185.

¹³⁰ Karpov, "Tainaya Rasprava..." Suslov added that Zhukov's sins against the Armed Forces and the Party had come in the year of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Soviet Army.

¹³¹ *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 19, "plenium tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS- oktyabr 1957 goda," 305.

however, Suslov failed to mention that all members of the Presidium (to include Suslov himself) had portraits hung around the country in schools, public squares, and streets. Suslov ended his verbal assault by attacking Zhukov for ignoring the Central Committee, and, without the consent of the Central Committee, creating sabotage schools which only a few military officers knew existed.¹³²

After the initial report by Suslov, Khrushchev demonstrated the full extent of change in Party politics since Stalinist times by allowing Zhukov to speak to the Central Committee in his own defense. Zhukov admitted to the Central Committee that he recognized his faults in the area of Party-political work within the military. The charges leveled against him by Suslov and the Presidium were baseless. Zhukov told those gathered that he believed that in the 1950s all officers/commanders were good communists; thus he saw less need for political officers (*zampoliti*). Times had changed since the 1920s, now most commanders were members of the CPSU.¹³³

Throughout the two-day plenum, many military officers spoke against Zhukov. Indignant and harsh words were spoken by Marshal Biryuzov and Admiral Gorshkov.¹³⁴ Both attacked the character of Zhukov. According to Biryuzov and Gorshkov, Zhukov was rude and showed crudeness to fellow officers and officials within the Ministry of Defense. Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal V.D. Sokolovskii, told the plenum that Zhukov tried not only to control the Army, but also the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the border troops of the KGB.

Sokolovskii said that Zhukov had worked to minimize the role of the Party and Central

¹³² Karpov, "Tainaya Rasprava...".

¹³³ *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 19, 255.

¹³⁴ V.P Naumov, "Delo Marshala G.K. Zhukova 1957g.," *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya* 6 (2000): 71. See also *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 19, 297.

Committee in the military. He attacked Zhukov for his apparent support of US President Eisenhower's 'Open Skies' plan. Sokolovskii said that 'Open Skies' amounted 'to [giving] freedom of the sky for the Americans over our [Soviet] territory.'¹³⁵ These accusations were used to make a case that Zhukov was supporting adventurism in foreign policy. Sokolovskii asked the Central Committee if Zhukov aspired to climb the political heights just as his American counterpart in World War II, Eisenhower, had done in becoming President of the United States. In supporting Eisenhower's proposal for open airspace over both the Soviet Union and the United States for weapons inspection from above, Zhukov was betraying the Motherland; he was committing treason in the eyes of some military commanders. If Zhukov supported the 'Open Skies' program, he saw it as a possible way to continue the feelings of détente occurring between the United States and the Soviet Union, a détente that was a foreign policy objective of Khrushchev.

Konev spoke next. He said that a close relationship between the armed forces and the Central Committee was necessary. For Konev, Zhukov's position in the Central Committee, and then the Presidium, was very useful in fostering a stronger political-military relationship. Zhukov's position should have allowed the Central Committee closer control and leadership over the armed forces. To Konev's regret, the situation did not develop along those lines, because Zhukov had opposed the leadership of the Party. Konev stressed that Zhukov's authority was given to him by the Central Committee. Zhukov did not respect or seem to understand the trust given to him by the Party. According to Konev, that was a major political mistake for Zhukov.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ V.P Naumov, "Delo Marshala G.K. Zhukova 1957g.," 72.

¹³⁶ V.P Naumov, "Delo marshala g.k. zhukova 1957g.,".

Konev publicly scathed Zhukov when writing in *Pravda* on 3 November 1957.¹³⁷ He lashed out at Zhukov's efforts to hamper political military work within the Soviet Army and Navy. Konev wrote that Zhukov did not look toward the Party organizations to help strengthen military discipline and order. No matter what, the Soviet Army and Navy must always report to the Central Committee. Even though Konev came out against Zhukov he did not assume the post as Minister of Defense because Khrushchev saw Konev as too similar of a professional soldier as Zhukov was. Marshal Biryuzov testified that the weakened state of 'party-political worker in the Soviet Army and Navy is foolishly linked with the activities of comrade Zhukov.'¹³⁸

Marshal A.I. Yeremenko attacked Zhukov for his historical role in the Great Patriotic War.¹³⁹ Yeremenko assailed Zhukov for taking too much credit for planning and carrying out the counteroffensive at Stalingrad. Yeremenko argued as Front Commander he and members of the Front Military Council, including Nikita Khrushchev, were responsible for successful planning and operational successes at Stalingrad. However, Zhukov, Vasilevskii, and Stavka had attributed success at Stalingrad to themselves.¹⁴⁰ Yeremenko went so far as to say that Zhukov was not at Stalingrad. Khrushchev was forced to correct him saying that Zhukov was there at the key moments of the battle. Khrushchev knew that in the meeting hall were present those who knew exactly what occurred at Stalingrad—soldiers and commanders who knew the truth.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ I.S. Konev, "Sila sovetskoi armii i flote—v rukovodstve partii, v nerazryvnoi sviazi s narodom," *Pravda* 307 (3 November 1957): 3-4.

¹³⁸ *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 19, 269.

¹³⁹ Yeremenko had risen to the rank of Marshal 1955, being promoted in the first post-war promotions by Khrushchev.

¹⁴⁰ Naumov, 72.

¹⁴¹ *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 19, 315.

Yeremenko was willing to take sole credit for the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, while also giving the correct amount of tribute to the current political leadership, namely Khrushchev, who was present during the battle. Yeremenko proved to be a shrewd Party-military man.¹⁴²

It was a hard decision for Khrushchev personally to remove Zhukov. He acknowledged whatever personal reasons for believing in Zhukov were outweighed by reasons of the Soviet state—security and defense of the Soviet Union and stability of the CPSU leadership over the country. Khrushchev and Zhukov had served together in the first months of World War II. For Khrushchev, “the war confirmed that he [Zhukov] was a really good commander. And I still think so, in spite of sharp differences I had with him at a later time, when he had become Minister of Defense of the USSR, an appointment I devoted all my efforts and energies to bring about.”¹⁴³ There was an instance at the October plenum when Zhukov attacked Moskalenko in his own defense. Khrushchev recalled the incident in his memoirs. According to several sources, Zhukov shouted at Moskalenko: “What are you accusing me of? You yourself said to me more than once, ‘why are you standing there looking around? Take power in your own hands. Take it.’”¹⁴⁴ Khrushchev believed what Zhukov was saying about Moskalenko. Zhukov’s argument has been substantiated by Sergei Khrushchev and Viktor Grishin.

¹⁴² *Georgii Zhukov*, Document 19, 315. With the removal of Zhukov came the rewriting of the histories of the Great Patriotic War. There was a “re-division of glory and military merits” among the leadership of the Party and Soviet military. A new stage in the revision of the history of the Great Patriotic War commenced. Zhukov’s name, as Stavka member, was given a more derogatory place in the history of the first months of the war when the Soviet Union was reeling from the invasion by the *Wehrmacht*. Zhukov was made culpable for the defeats in the summer 1941. *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945* was published in Moscow 1960-1965. That history celebrated the significance of N.S. Khrushchev in the war. After Khrushchev’s ouster in 1964 the history of the Great Patriotic War was rewritten. *History of the Second World War 1939-1945* was published in 12 volumes from 1971 to 1978. It was a post-Khrushchev official history.

¹⁴³ N.S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya...*, vol. 1, 296. At the beginning of the German-Soviet war, Zhukov commanded the Kiev Special Military District, while Khrushchev was head of the Ukrainian Communist Party.

¹⁴⁴ N.S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya...*, vol., 651. See also Brian Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations, 1689-2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 187.

Moskalenko was a capable and brave commander during the Second World War, and he was well-respected by Khrushchev. Khrushchev, however, knew he was a sycophant and a weathercock.¹⁴⁵ No one took Moskalenko seriously because of his personality. Moskalenko would say one thing one day and turn 180 degrees the next. Zhukov knew he was on his way out. He had no reason to lie. Moskalenko did not refute Zhukov's claims, which further substantiates Zhukov's assertions.¹⁴⁶ Thus, while Zhukov believed that he himself did not covet political authority within the Soviet Union, and that the claims leveled against him were false, he proudly voted for the measures to remove him from his positions within the Party. He remained a Party member and was allowed to retire respectably from the Soviet Army with the highest rank—Marshal of the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

What evidence were the charges against Zhukov based? Did Zhukov oppose the Central Committee and Party control of the Armed Forces? Did he have Bonapartist goals? Was Zhukov cultivating his own cult of the individual within the Armed Forces? Let us now examine each accusation leveled against him.

The most damning charge was probably that of Bonapartism.¹⁴⁷ According to the Central Committee Zhukov maintained goals of instigating a *coup d'état* against the governing

¹⁴⁵ Sergei Khrushchev, Interviewed by author, tape recording, Pittsburgh, PA. 23 November 2002, and correspondence 2002 to 2005.

¹⁴⁶ N.S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya*, vol. 1, 651.

¹⁴⁷ Bonapartism is defined as the idea that the military covets power after success in the field in the same fashion that Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in France at the beginning of the 19th century.

leadership of the Soviet state. There is currently no evidence to validate that accusation. The actions taken against Zhukov, furthermore, were such that the leadership could not have suspected he was a Bonapartist. He was kept on active duty until March 1958. Never was Zhukov arrested, exiled, or expelled from the CPSU. Upon Khrushchev's ouster from power, Zhukov appeared on top of Lenin's Mausoleum for May Day 1965 in full military uniform along with Brezhnev and the new Party leadership. Further undermining the Bonapartist charge was that no major military district commanders were charged with conspiracy or removed from their command posts in conjunction with Zhukov's ouster. Moskalenko, who in 1957 commanded the Moscow Military District (which would have been necessary to have on one's side for a coup) remained at his post until 1960. Marshal Rokossovskii was sent to command the Transcaucasian Military District from October to December 1957. He was seen as a possible supporter of Zhukov; Party officials removed him so that Zhukov did not have his vocal support at the October plenum.¹⁴⁸ However, Rokossovskii had not held a command at the time of his short removal from the Soviet capital, and he posed no real threat.

The only charge that stands against Zhukov was his work to curtail Party-political work within the Soviet Army and Navy. According to the Central Committee, Zhukov "pursued a policy directed toward the curtailment of the work of the Party organizations, political organs, and military councils" in the Soviet Armed Forces.¹⁴⁹ Zhukov strongly encouraged political officers to increase their own military education and understanding, and military training. These would facilitate greater overall discipline. Zhukov wanted political education to be related to combat training. In fact, with the onset of the arms race and the increased tensions of the Cold

¹⁴⁸ *Pravda*, 3 November 1957.

¹⁴⁹ Colton, *Commissars, Commanders...*, 188.

War, political education relied less on ideology and more on Cold War rhetoric. It could be said that Zhukov was ahead of his time. With new weapons of greater destructive power, he was incorporating the changing circumstances of the international situation to combat and political training. Since 1964, the indictment against Zhukov concerning political-Party work has been lessened and even eliminated from histories of what transpired in the fall 1957.¹⁵⁰ In the history of the GPU written in 1969, Zhukov's role in advocating the decrease of political work within the Armed Forces went practically unmentioned. It only states that he is purported to have undervalued Party work within the Soviet Army and Navy.

Khrushchev was ousted from his Party posts in October 1964. Now both in retirement, Khrushchev and Zhukov wrote their memoirs. Zhukov had started his while Khrushchev was still in power. The KGB had come to Khrushchev to tell him of Zhukov's memoirs. He told them, "don't interfere. Zhukov is retired and what can a pensioner do but write his memoirs. He has a lot to remember."¹⁵¹ According to Axell, Zhukov supposedly had gone home after the October plenum taken sleeping pills, woke up, took more pills, and slept more. For 15 days he slept, and then he fished.¹⁵²

After Khrushchev's fall, Zhukov slowly rose out of his *persona nongrata* status in Soviet society. He attended May Day celebrations, and along with the Victory Day parade, in 1965. In 1971, Zhukov was elected a delegate to the Twenty-fourth Party Congress of the CPSU. While writing his memoirs, each chapter had to be approved by the Party propagandists and ideologists. The first editions of his memoirs, published in the 1970s, were extensively edited and censored.

¹⁵⁰ Colton, *Commissars, Commanders...*, 189.

¹⁵¹ Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev...* 251.

¹⁵² Axell, 168.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Zhukov's memoirs have been published uncensored in Russian. An English translation of the latest edition has yet to be undertaken.

On 18 June 1974, Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, four-time Hero of the Soviet Union, died. Zhukov is buried in the Kremlin Wall, and an equestrian statue erected in his honor now stands outside Red Square in front of the State Historical Museum. In 1996, in honor of the 100th anniversary of his birth, the Order of Zhukov was established in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Not since the Decembrists' uprising against Nicholas I has the military shown any Bonapartist or praetorian tendencies; the same held true for Zhukov. He was a loyal Soviet citizen serving the current government of the state. Patriotic and devoted to the military, he had no intention to seek political leadership; however, he was given membership in the highest decision-making body of the CPSU. His time is not so black and white. Given the opportunity and office to do so, Zhukov pushed for greater political autonomy for the Soviet military and used his post on the Presidium to participate and influence debates on a number of policies beyond the purview of purely military concerns. He chose to participate in the removal of Beria for personal reasons based on the history both men shared, for political gains for the military at the expense of the security services, and Zhukov was elevated to the political organ of the CPSU, the Central Committee.

Georgii Zhukov served the Russian people and state both during the Imperial and Soviet eras of Russian history. Zhukov was a Russian officer in Soviet Russia. In Zhukov's own words 'time will put everything in its place and judge everybody...You can only properly serve people

by telling the truth and fighting for it.”¹⁵³ Ella Zhukova, a daughter of Zhukov, states that her “father was not a servant of the government or of any leading groups. He was a servant of his country, as far as he understood it.”¹⁵⁴ The sense of duty Georgii Zhukov felt for Russia was much deeper than any sense of serving the Soviet government per se. Zhukov was above all a professional military officer. Serving the motherland, defending his country, and upholding the values of a military officer were duties that Zhukov carried out in the service of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

After the Great Patriotic War, Zhukov was a national hero in the eyes of a majority of Soviet citizens. In the hearts and minds of Soviet citizens Zhukov served the Russian people heroically, saving them from the horrors brought by the Germans. Zhukov’s heroic status, however, was not a good quality for him to have in the eyes of Stalin or the CPSU leadership. Stalin, and to an extent the Party, claimed to have single-handedly brought about the victory over Fascist Germany. Zhukov was ‘exiled’ from Moscow. Zhukov had served his purposes for Stalin during the war, but in those years immediately after the war, Stalin grew wary, and he no longer needed a strong popular military leader by his side in peacetime.

While Khrushchev was First Secretary, Zhukov was used again as a political pawn to sustain Khrushchev’s leadership. Zhukov supported Khrushchev’s policies that he believed would enhance the security of the USSR, but also understood the lines between CPSU domain of military strategy and doctrine, and where the domain of the armed forces was being encroached upon. Khrushchev used Zhukov to his advantage and for his own personal gain against others in the Party who challenged him for leadership as in the removal of Malenkov. In the post-Stalinist

¹⁵³ Axell, 2.

¹⁵⁴ Axell, 221.

years, Zhukov did play a role in the political-military relations of the Soviet Union. It was a role for which he was co-opted. Zhukov did not actively seek out positions granted him by the Party leadership in the Central Committee and eventually the Presidium. Throughout this study, the extent of Zhukov's role in politics has depended on the Party itself. Given a voice in political organs, Zhukov was able to advance and at times attempt to protect the military's interest.

Zhukov was given leadership posts as an agent acting within the confines of the structure of the Soviet state. His positions were both within the military, one institution of that structure, and after 1956, in the leading decision-making bodies of the CPSU, another institution in the structure of the state. Those posts gave Zhukov the opportunity to speak for and against certain policies. In the end the structure of the state confined and removed Zhukov from his positions both in the military and the Party. When allowed to play a more integral role, Zhukov did so, and when the Party curtailed him, Zhukov adhered to Party rules and dictums. In the case of the June 1957 Plenum that ousted the Anti-Party Group, Zhukov did not play such a central role in Khrushchev's political victory, but played a political role in allowing military transports to bring Khrushchev supporters in the Central Committee back to Moscow. While some senior Soviet military commanders may have been dragged into the political games of the Soviet Union, the masses of the Soviet Armed Forces remained non-political. Loyalty to the state, whether tsarist or communist, was the driving factor in Zhukov's relationship with governing authorities.

There is evidence that Zhukov used his Party leadership positions to influence Party matters, including the foreign and domestic policies of Khrushchev. He was part of conversations and decision-making votes concerns policies before the Polish and Hungarian crises as well as his own pointed views on the necessity of pursuing Eisenhower's planned Open

Skies program. No clear evidence has been found to prove charges of a possible military coup led by Zhukov. Historians must engage in further scholarship and research on political-military relations of the 1950s and 1960s to answer further questions about Zhukov's and the military's role in Communist Party politics.

Chapter 3: Malinovskii and Civil-Military Relations

During a 2006 conference, in Hamburg, Germany, on local conflict during the Cold War, several Russian historians referred to Marshal Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovskii as nothing more than a sycophantic yes-man fiercely loyal to Khrushchev.¹ Those historians argue that Malinovskii put his loyalty to Khrushchev before his professional military duties in supporting Khrushchev's policies for reform and change to the Soviet armed forces. Malinovskii and Khrushchev did have a strong professional relationship. Khrushchev and Malinovskii served together at Stalingrad; Malinovskii became one of the members of the Stalingrad Group during the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter will show that, contrary to the historians at the Hamburg conference, Malinovskii was a more nuanced personality. Khrushchev was to believe that Malinovskii was more 'Party-minded' than his predecessor. Khrushchev perceived Malinovskii to be concerned with his own career advancement rather than called by a sense of duty to military professionalism, thus, Khrushchev considered Malinovskii to be a more malleable officer over others than could have been elevated to replace Zhukov. Marshal Ivan Konev was a choice to become Minister of Defence in 1957, but Khrushchev believed he would always speak his mind in the presence of Party officials, even if his opinion differed from Khrushchev's. Khrushchev even wrote in his memoirs that Konev was the selected choice of Zhukov to succeed to the post.² The choice of Malinovskii over Konev in 1957 is the clearest sign that

¹ Local Conflict in the Cold War, Institute for Social Research, Hamburg, Germany, April 2006.

² *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 2 Reformer, 1945-1964, ed. Sergei Khrushchev (University Park, PA; Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 239.

Khrushchev's selection of personalities, of agents, to lead the Soviet armed forces was based in the notion of mediocrity over meritorious service. The two officers' different service during World War II illustrated the necessity to be a wartime colleague of Khrushchev's at Stalingrad in order to be promoted in the leading posts of the Soviet military in the 1950s and 1960s. While Malinovskii served at Stalingrad, Konev was Zhukov's man during the Battle of Moscow earlier in the war and again during the Battle of Kursk.

While assumed to be a logical, safe choice by Khrushchev as Minister of Defence, Malinovskii was able publicly to support those policies to reform the armed forces and at the same time supporting the more conservative military officers who argued for a more balanced force structure in the Soviet arsenal. In that respect, Malinovskii did not entirely differ from Zhukov. As Minister of Defence, both officers supported Khrushchev's single-mindedness toward nuclear weapons while at the same time calling for the retention of conventional forces. This chapter will focus on the role Marshal Malinovskii in civil-military relations after he replaced Zhukov as Minister of Defence in October 1957. From his appointment until 1964, Malinovskii was able to support Khrushchev while at the same time still maintaining his military professionalism.

Malinovskii and Konev: Early Military Careers

Malinovskii was born in 1898, while Konev was born the previous year. Just like Zhukov, Malinovskii served both the last tsar and the newly founded Soviet state with distinction in the First World War and Russian Civil respectively. When the First World War broke out in

1914, Malinovskii left home to join the tsarist army. He was wounded during the war and received the St. George Cross for bravery and devotion.³ In this sense Zhukov and Malinovskii had similar experiences during the First World War. However, while Zhukov served as a non-commissioned officer, Malinovskii fought as a lowly private in the trenches. Also, Malinovskii fought on the Western Front during the First World War as part of the Russian Expeditionary Force sent to France in 1916.

While stationed in France Malinovskii was again cited for bravery for his service at the battle of Fort Brion. Malinovskii was wounded once more in France and was decorated with the Croix de Guerre. After the Bolshevik Revolution, France disbanded the Russian units serving on the Western Front. Malinovskii took a circuitous route back to Russia via Vladivostok.⁴ With some of his fellow Russian soldiers from France, Malinovskii joined the Red Army in 1919 as a machine-gunner in the 240th Tver Regiment. Malinovskii's unit served in Siberia fighting against the White Forces under Admiral Kolchak.

Marshal Ivan Konev's military career officially began two years after Malinovskii when he was conscripted into service in 1916. As the revolutions of 1917 progressed, Konev's unit missed most of the fighting in the First World War. As a new soldier in the newly founded Red Army, Konev first served as a political commissar in the Nikolsk district through 1918. At the end of the Civil War, Konev participated in the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion in 1921.⁵

³ John Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," in Harold Shukman's *Stalin's Generals* (London: Phoenix Press, 1997), 117.

⁴ Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 117.

⁵ Oleg Rzheshesky, "Ivan Stepanovich Konev," in Harold Shukman's *Stalin's Generals* (London: Phoenix Press, 1997), 91.

Konev's career following the Civil War was punctuated by positive and negative performance reports. In 1932, A. Kork, commander of the 3rd Rifles Corps, and Konev's superior, called Konev, 'a proletarian commander who took the full weight of his post on himself and always led by personal example.'⁶ Six months after that report came several less flattering personal reports on Konev by his commander.

Throughout the 1920s Malinovskii attended and successfully completed a number of command and officer schools. In 1927 he entered the Frunze Military Academy and graduated three years later. Malinovskii joined the CPSU in 1926 while still at the academy. After several appointments he came to serve as Chief of Staff under Semyon Timoshenko. Timoshenko was a protege of Marshal Semyon Budenny and through Budenny a protege of Stalin. Malinovskii's interwar service differed in that respect from the experience of Zhukov. Possibly, Malinovskii was protected during the purges from questioning because of his association with Timoshenko and Budenny. As stated in the previous chapter, Zhukov's association with Uborevich and Tukhachevskii had led to his questioning by the NKVD. Malinovskii served under Timoshenko until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Malinovskii followed other Soviet officers volunteering for service in the International Brigades and the Republican forces fighting against the Spanish fascists under Francisco Franco and their Italian and German allies. He dutifully fought during the defence of Madrid. In 1938 Malinovskii was recalled to Moscow on orders that if he did not comply he would be considered a traitor.⁷ Unlike other officers who were tainted by their service in Spain and were tortured, Malinovskii was rewarded for his service. He was awarded the Order of Lenin and the Order of

⁶ Rzheshesky, "Ivan Stepanovich Konev," 93.

⁷ Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 118.

the Red Banner. In 1939 Malinovskii began an appointment as a lecturer at the Frunze Military Academy. He was promoted to the rank of Major-General just months before the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Malinovskii and Konev: Separate Paths to Victory in World War II

Not only did Malinovskii's service during World War II differ from that of his predecessor but also with Konev. While Malinovskii served throughout the war in the Soviet south-west zone of operations and movement from that area toward Germany and Austria, Konev's service was initially against the German approaches to Moscow and subsequent central push toward Berlin. Zhukov served as a member of *Stavka* throughout the war, being sent to key battles throughout the war. Malinovskii served as a commander to various armies and *Fronts*. His 48th Rifle Corps was part of the Odessa Military District on 22 June 1941. Throughout the early defeats suffered by the Soviet armed forces, Malinovskii's soldiers fought well. Although defeated, they withdrew in an orderly fashion and were able to fight another day.

On the invasion day, then Colonel-General Konev's 19th Army was stationed near Smolensk. Outnumbered during the Battle for Smolensk, Konev's 'personal courage and energetic initiative in difficult circumstances were characteristic of Konev as a military leader throughout the war.'⁸ Despite having to retreat east toward Moscow, Konev managed to set up defensive positions along the German western approaches to Moscow. On 12 September 1941, Konev replaced Marshal Semyon Timoshenko as commander of the Soviet Western Front faced

⁸ Rzheshesky, 'Ivan Stepanovich Konev,' 91.

with again defending the western approaches to Moscow near Vyazma. Faced with mounting German pressure Konev was forced to retreat toward Moscow and in the process 500,000 Soviet soldiers were encircled and taken prisoner.⁹ Konev was replaced by Zhukov, who had returned to Moscow from Leningrad on *STAVKA*'s orders. However, Zhukov saved Konev's military career from Stalin. He argued to Stalin that Konev had to be kept in the command structure as his deputy in the Western Front. Subsequent to being retained as Zhukov's deputy commander of the Western Front, Konev was named commander of the Kalinin Front in October 1941 and tasked with guarding the northern approaches to Moscow, protecting Zhukov's right flank as Zhukov's forces were facing the Germans head on in front of Moscow.¹⁰ Despite early setbacks for Konev around Smolensk and the approaches to Moscow, the advocacy of Zhukov retained Konev in the service to the army during the Battle of Moscow. Konev's course through the war would see his service in this central axis of advance toward Berlin, eventually placing him at odds with Zhukov during the final battle to take the German capital.

During the ill-fated Kharkov offensive in May 1942 Malinovskii's troops were part of the disaster where the German breakthrough was significant. The panic which ensued gave rise to Stalin's suspicions about Malinovskii's service to the Soviet Union. Stalin believed that Malinovskii still maintained contact with foreign agents from his time in France during 1916 to 1917. Stalin had doubts about Malinovskii's allegiance, much as the CPSU leader had questioned Konev's mettle during the battle for Moscow. He questioned Malinovskii's desire to defeat German aggression.¹¹ Throughout most of the war, Stalin would harbor questions about

⁹ Rodric Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941: A City and Its People at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 191.

¹⁰ Andrew Nagorski, *The Greatest Battle: Stalin, Hitler, and the Desperate Struggle for Moscow that Changed the Course of World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 133. Braithwaite, 262.

¹¹ Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 119.

Malinovskii's allegiance. According to Khrushchev, he was tasked by Stalin to 'keep an eye' on Malinovskii, especially while they were both serving in Stalingrad.¹² Whereas Zhukov was the 'protector' of Konev in the early days of World War II, it was Khrushchev, the eventual CPSU leader whose protection kept Malinovskii in command during the Battle of Stalingrad. This difference between the two officers is illustrated in their careers in the period after Zhukov's dismissal in 1957.

In August 1942 Malinovskii moved to the Stalingrad *Front* to take command of the 66th Army that was drawn from *Stavka's* reserves. Malinovskii's army was to face heavy fighting in the German drive on Stalingrad. After a brief command stint at the Voronezh *Front*, Malinovskii returned to Stalingrad as commander of the 2nd Guards Army that was one of the best-equipped and most formidable fighting force in the Red Army at that time. The 2nd Guards Army was composed of five rifle corps and a mechanised corps.¹³ Malinovskii and the 2nd Guards Army played an integral part by holding off German forces sent to relieve Field Marshal von Paulus's encircled VI Army.

For the remainder of the war, Malinovskii served as commander to various *Fronts*. The forces under his command participated in the operations to retake Odessa. Malinovskii was promoted to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1944. He then commanded forces that cleared Romania of German army units and moved toward taking Budapest. After arguing with Stalin on beginning the attack on Budapest after a forced march, Malinovskii's soldiers struggled

¹² *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), 204

¹³ Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 120.

in a bloody fight to take the Hungarian capital. From Budapest, Malinovskii's units moved into Austria and together with the 3rd Ukrainian Front took Vienna on 13 April 1945.¹⁴

Despite his forces taking Vienna at the end of the war, Malinovskii was not appointed to the Allied Control Commission for Austria. That office was presented to Konev. Unlike Malinovskii who served with Khrushchev at the Battle of Stalingrad, Konev's decision action was during the Battle of Kursk the following summer. Shortly after the actions near Moscow were decided in the Red Army's favour, Konev was again named commander of the Western Front, then the Northwestern Front, and finally in June 1943, the Steppe Front, which he took into battle at Kursk.¹⁵ Although several members of the forthcoming Stalingrad Group of officers were present at Kursk, along with Khrushchev, Konev's interaction with them, especially with Khrushchev was limited.

Konev commanded the Steppe Front and his Chief of Staff was Matvei Zakharov, who was to become Chief of the General Staff twice in the 1960s. One of the outspoken critics of Khrushchev's military policies and changes to doctrine in the 1950s and 1960s, Lieutenant-General P. Rotmistrov commanded the 5th Guards Army, under Konev's Steppe Front.¹⁶ Even Zakharov, while serving twice as Chief of the General Staff under Khrushchev, was replaced for the first time in 1963, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, over his perceived opinions on the 1962 operation. Zakharov was replaced in 1963 by Marshal Biryuzov, who served a short stint the previous year as commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces.

¹⁴ Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 121.

¹⁵ Rzheshesky, "Ivan Stepanovich Konev," 96.

¹⁶ David Glantz and Jonathan House, *The Battle of Kursk* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 326.

Khrushchev was attached to the Voronezh Front as political commissar to its commander, Army General Vatutin. The Voronezh Front's Chief of Staff was Lieutenant-General S.P Ivanov, who was serving in the planning section of the General Staff during the build-up to the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹⁷ Moskalenko, who proved important in the arrest of Beria, commanded the 40th Army of the Voronezh Front - thus in a unit that politically reported to Khrushchev. At Kursk, Malinovskii commanded the Southwestern Front; A. Zheltov served as his political commissar. Zheltov headed the GPU from 1955 to 1957 and led the political attacks in the military against Zhukov in the summer and autumn 1957.¹⁸

There was a clear division of service in the 1950s and 1960s. Service at Stalingrad clearly was more important than service at Kursk. However, those in the Steppe Front saw their service to the Soviet military ended early in the 1960s, especially when they voiced opinions in opposition to Khrushchev's policies. From Kursk, Konev's service took him toward Berlin, as Malinovskii's forces moved southwest toward Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. Konev and Zhukov's bitterness toward each other in regards to the battle for Berlin has been covered in the previous chapter.

After the war, Konev was named commander of the Central Group of Soviet Forces stationed in Austria and given a place on the Allied control Commission. He held this post until he was recalled to Moscow as Zhukov was being replaced and 'exiled' from the highest echelons of the military leadership. Konev was named commander-in-chief of the Soviet Ground Forces and Deputy Defence Minister, replacing Zhukov in both positions, in June 1946.¹⁹

¹⁷ Glantz and House, 306.

¹⁸ Glantz and House, 320.

¹⁹ Rzheshevsky, 103.

After victory in the European theater, Malinovskii was transferred to the Far East to take part in the final days of the war with Japan. In July 1945 Malinovskii became the commander of the Transbaikal *Front*, which was the main Soviet force operating in Manchuria against the Japanese Kwangtung Army. He was able successfully to implement the tactics of deep maneuvers by mechanised forces to encircle the Japanese forces in front of his lines.²⁰ By September, Malinovskii's forces had retaken Dalian and Port Arthur that were lost by Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). For his service in the Far East campaign against Japan, Malinovskii was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. The citation specifically mentioned his service to the Soviet army and his grasp of both command and operation art.²¹

Post War Years

Over the next ten years Malinovskii remained in command posts in the Far East of the Soviet Union. From 1945 to 1947 Malinovskii commanded the Transbaikal Military District. In 1947, Malinovskii assumed the command of the Far East Military District; he remained in this post until 1956, while Konev was recalled from Austria to Moscow in 1946.²² In Moscow, Konev replaced the disgraced Zhukov as Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces and Deputy Defence Minister. According to Erickson, during the Korean War Khrushchev suggested to Stalin that Malinovskii be sent to North Korea, under his former alias from the Spanish Civil

²⁰ Yurii Lubchenkov and Viktor Artemov, *Marshal Malinovskii, ot soldata do marshala*. (Moskva; Yauza, Ehksmo, 2008), 328,

²¹ Lubchenkov and Artemov, 332.

²² Lubchenkov and Artemov, 333.

War, to counsel Kim Il-sung. Stalin rejected Khrushchev's thought.²³ At Khrushchev's behest, Malinovskii was recalled to Moscow in March 1956. Malinovskii was appointed a Deputy Defence Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces. Along with other officers from the Stalingrad Group, Malinovskii was elected to the Central Committee of the CPSU.

After Zhukov's return to Moscow in 1952, Konev remained head of the Soviet ground forces and Zhukov's deputy after February 1953. Konev was made Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact forces at its founding in 1955. He held that post until his retirement in 1960.

On 26 October 1957, Marshal Zhukov was dismissed as Minister of Defence of the Soviet Union and it was announced that Malinovskii was to replace him. Malinovskii and Khrushchev were close associates during the war. He and Khrushchev were close confidants at several key battles, especially at Stalingrad.²⁴ Malinovskii commanded the Southern *Front* during the war, which was one of the *Fronts* that Khrushchev served as a member of the military soviet (council). Khrushchev believed that his closer relationship with Malinovskii would facilitate greater control over his new Defence Minister. Malinovskii was deemed to be more pliable by Khrushchev. His personal style was unlike Zhukov, presumably making him more attractive as a replacement. In his memoirs, Khrushchev discussed the decision to appoint Malinovskii to head the Ministry of Defence:

In the Party leadership there were no objections to Malinovskii. Of course his authority on a world scale and throughout the Soviet Union was less than Zhukov's. On the other hand, Marshal Malinovskii had an outstanding record during the war to recommend him, and he was by no means an accidental figure

²³ John Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 121.

²⁴ Lubchenkov and Artemov, 337.

in the realm of military affairs. On a personal plane he didn't have Zhukov's energy and drive; he was calm and somewhat slow-moving by nature.²⁵

Khrushchev was giving preference to Malinovskii over other well-qualified candidates for the post. Marshal Ivan Stepanovich Konev was a choice that was also considered. In 1957, Konev was commander-in-chief of the combined forces of the Warsaw Pact. Zhukov's choice to replace him was Konev who Zhukov deemed as more qualified in military affairs for the post.

Khrushchev believed that Konev was a good candidate for the Ministry of Defence but questioned his personality. Konev was believed to be too similar to Zhukov. Khrushchev thought that, 'Konev was capable of conducting himself less candidly in relation to the party leadership and the government.'²⁶ Thus, Khrushchev saw Konev as a continuation of Zhukov. Seeking someone more predisposed to acquiescing the Party line on military affairs, Khrushchev chose Malinovskii to head the Ministry of Defence. He chose an officer who he had known in the war, and that he felt had a personality that would be easily controlled. It was Khrushchev's decisions that made the choice of personality important in Soviet civil-military relations. He made personality and the choice of agents an issue in that relationship.

In 1957, Konev held the post of head of the Warsaw Pact forces headquartered in Warsaw, a post he held until being retired to the Chief Inspectorate of the Defence Ministry and replaced by Marshal Andrei Grechko in 1960. While Zhukov spoke in favour of Konev's elevation to Defence Minister, and Khrushchev dismissed the notion owing to the fact that both officers were perceived to come from similar molds, Garthoff has agreed with the assessment that Konev was eventually retired based on Konev's lack of support toward Khrushchev's

²⁵ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Reformer*, vol. 2, edited by Sergei Khrushchev (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

²⁶ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Reformer*, vol. 2, 239.

military policies. Garthoff argued that Konev was forcibly retired in 1960 because the marshal did not actively support Khrushchev's policies concerning military reform.²⁷ Epitomised in that decision was a clear division between military leaders and political leaders. Military leaders were primarily concerned with the requirements for waging war based on proscribed doctrine whereas political leaders were more interested in the political usages of military power short of general war.²⁸ Konev's expertise and service were recalled a year after his retirement, he was brought back into active service to take command of the Soviet Group of Forces Germany during the Berlin crisis over the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. He was retained in Germany until early 1962. Konev's recall for service in 1961 is not dissimilar from Zhukov recall to Moscow in the early 1950s. In both situations the Cold War was heating up and relations between the main protagonists and the Soviet leaders of the day turned toward their military leaders with the education and expertise to lead in times of elevated tensions.

Malinovskii Walking a Fine Line Between Officers and Khrushchev

'In the beginning Malinovskii played a role akin to that of a referee in what became an increasingly acrimonious debate, attempting to support Khrushchev's policies at large, but also taking into account the reservations, voiced and unvoiced, of the more conservative elements within the Soviet High Command.'²⁹ The first issue that Malinovskii dealt with was his

²⁷ Raymond Garthoff, "Military Power in Soviet Society," in John Erickson, Edward Crowley, and Nikolai Galay, editors, *The Military-Technical Revolution: Its Impact on Strategic and Foreign Policy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 250-51.

²⁸ Raymond Garthoff, "Military Power in Soviet Society," 252.

²⁹ Erickson, "Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky," 123.

predecessor's view on the role of the Party in military affairs. Zhukov increasingly had reduced the role of Party controls in the military culminating in the May 1957 'Instructions to the Organisations of the CPSU in the Soviet Army and Navy.' Those instructions were replaced in April 1958 with a Statute on Military Councils, which increased the size and authority of military councils at all levels of military organisations.³⁰ In October 1958, the role and authority of the political organs in the military were increased. All activities including those deemed the sole purview of the military, were now included in the scope of work by political organs. The October 'Statute on the Political Organs in the Soviet Army and Navy' also increased the time officers and soldiers had to spend in political education classes.³¹

Although Malinovskii supported Khrushchev's goal of the re-imposition of Party controls, he spoke out against the return to Stalinist controls. Less than a year after Zhukov's removal, Malinovskii had played the role of mediator between Khrushchev's thoughts on Party controls and the more conservative line held by the military command. Malinovskii saw a strong correlation between the increased role of the political organs in the army and navy and the decline of military discipline. Writing in *Krasnaya zvezda* in November 1958 Malinovskii discussed the decline of military discipline. The main problem Malinovskii saw was the deteriorating position of officers. The resumption of the practice of *kritika* and *samokritika* after the removal of Zhukov increased criticism by soldiers to their officers and the rise of outright insubordination.³² Malinovskii argued that a return to *edinonachalie* was the only way to re-

³⁰ Colonel S.M. Borzunov (ed.), *Resheniya oktyabrskogo plenuma TsK KPSS v deistvii* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1959), 7.

³¹ Borzunov, 20-35.

³² *Krasnaya zvezda*, 1 November 1958.

establish military discipline; *edinonachalie* was the best way to practice military life.³³

Malinovskii argued that military and political work within military units had to function together by progressing toward a common goal of ‘strengthening the combat capability and readiness of the army and navy.’³⁴ While not speaking out against Khrushchev’s policies, Malinovskii put into question the need for the strong, stringent reimposition of Party controls after the October 1957 CC plenum. Thus, shortly after Malinovskii assumed the Minister’s post, he was already speaking for the military’s position on Party controls.

Zhukov had one asset as Minister of Defence that Malinovskii did not possess. After February 1956, Zhukov was head of the ministry and a member of the Presidium. Malinovskii never became a member of the Presidium. In 1956, Zhukov attended thirty-eight Presidium meetings but spoke at less than half of those. Many of those meetings centered around military issues necessitated by the twin crises in Poland and Hungary.³⁵ The following year Zhukov attended fifteen Presidium meetings, including those that dealt with the Anti-Party Group and his own removal in October.³⁶ Malinovskii attended on average less than ten Presidium meetings a year and was only invited to key meetings such as those which dealt with the Cuban Missile Crisis.³⁷ Malinovskii attended his first Presidium meeting as Minister of Defence on 7 December 1957. That meeting included a discussion of the Defence Ministry’s plans for military material procurement in 1958.³⁸ On 31 December 1957, Malinovskii and Khrushchev discussed

³³ *Krasnaya zvezda*, 1 November 1958.

³⁴ *Krasnaya zvezda*, 1 November 1958.

³⁵ *Arkhivii Kremlya, prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964* tom. 1, 81-216.

³⁶ *Arkhivii Kremlya, prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964* tom. 1, 217-288.

³⁷ *Arkhivii Kremlya, prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964* tom. 1, 289-875.

³⁸ Protocol 128a, *Arkhivii Kremlya, prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964* tom. 1, 285.

military personnel appointments at a Presidium meeting including new commanders for the Transcaucasian Military District and of the Group of Soviet Forces stationed in Poland.³⁹

Malinovskii's counsel on military affairs was sought by the Presidium from time to time. However, even at some of the most tense moments of the Cold War his counsel was either dismissed or not requested. When Khrushchev ignited the Berlin Crisis on 10 November 1958 by announcing in a speech on Polish friendship with the Soviet Union that he sought a resolve and peace formally to end the Second World War, the military's advise was not sought. Malinovskii was not invited to the Presidium meeting which discussed the implications of turning access decisions on West Berlin over to the East German authorities. No preliminary military plans were formulated.⁴⁰ During a key decision the military's voice was not sought, nor did the Soviet armed forces have the ability to voice its own opinions at the Presidium level after Zhukov was removed. When the Berlin crisis was reignited with the decision to close the East-West border between Berlin, Khrushchev did seek the advise of his military commanders in Berlin and from Malinovskii. The military commander in Berlin and of the Group of Soviet Forces I.I. Yakubovskii was temporarily replaced by Konev in August 1961. The argument was to have a more knowledgeable commander in that post if hostilities erupted. Control of the East German armed forces was transferred to Marshal Andrei Grechko, commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact forces.⁴¹ In September 1961, Malinovskii argued that the East Germans were too quick to shoot at those attempting to cross the border to West Berlin and that is was happening

³⁹ Protocol 131, *Arkhivii Kremlya, prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964* tom. 1, 288.

⁴⁰ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, 196.

⁴¹ Hope Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2003), 187.

more often. Throughout the Berlin crisis Malinovskii provided military advice when it was sought.

In Malinovskii, Khrushchev believed he had a much more pliable, Party-minded, Minister of Defence. Malinovskii attended the Paris conference from 16 to 17 May 1960 with Khrushchev. Held shortly after the Soviets shot down an American U-2 over Sverdlovsk, the conference came to naught when Khrushchev walked out early. Khrushchev and Malinovskii decided while in France to visit the village where Malinovskii had been stationed on the Western Front during the First World War. According to Khrushchev's memoirs numerous French residents of the village came to see the leader of the Soviet union and the Minister of Defence who had lived in the village years before.⁴² With events like the day in the French village, Khrushchev believed he had solidified a strong relationship with Malinovskii. The following year the relationship would be tested over Khrushchev's ideas to modernise the Soviet armed forces.

As previously discussed in the first chapter, the greatest debate among the military and the Party leadership was over the direction of Soviet military doctrine and the composition of the armed forces's modern arsenal. Malinovskii played an integral role in that debate. Malinovskii proved more skilled at toeing the Party line on nuclear weapons while at the same time arguing for the retention of modern, conventional forces. Khrushchev constantly touted the need to rely solely on nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems. Malinovskii supported Khrushchev in the development of nuclear weapons but also believed the Soviet armed forces had to maintain conventional forces. Speaking in May 1961 after the recent Soviet-German

⁴² *Khrushchev Remembers*, 202.

combined exercises under the auspices of the Warsaw Pact, Malinovskii stressed the importance of conventional forces even in the event of the outbreak of a nuclear conflict. Malinovskii argued that in a nuclear war, ballistic missiles would play the most important part in the initial phase of the war. However:

During the first operations in the initial phase of war, the army ground forces mainly have to exploit in their area of attack the results of strategic nuclear strikes. Only very sparingly should they use their own nuclear weapons, instead keeping the bulk of them for battle behind the enemy lines. The transition to attack must be contingent on the level of radiation resulting from nuclear missile strikes with strategic weapons.⁴³

Malinovskii supported military commanders that argued for a role for conventional forces on a nuclear battlefield. Malinovskii argued that personnel could be protected from radiation by reinforcing transports, tanks, and helicopters, or by simply moving around radiated areas of the battlefield.⁴⁴ Arguing against Khrushchev call to reduce spending to modern tanks by advancing the argument that only modern tanks can successfully maneuver in and around nuclear battlefields. Tanks and mechanised infantry are able swiftly to move into the rear areas of an enemy's lines and disrupt communications.⁴⁵

Malinovskii continued to support both Khrushchev and military commanders viewpoints on modern warfare at the Twenty-Second Party Congress. While supporting the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, Malinovskii added that only through combined arms, including modern conventional forces, can the Soviet Union hope to be victorious in the next

⁴³ Speech by Marshal Malinovskii Describing the Need for Warsaw Pact Offensive Operations May 1961, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB154/doc16.pdf>

⁴⁴ Speech by Marshal Malinovskii Describing the Need for Warsaw Pact Offensive Operations May 1961, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB154/doc16.pdf>

⁴⁵ Speech by Marshal Malinovskii Describing the Need for Warsaw Pact Offensive Operations May 1961, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB154/doc16.pdf>

war.⁴⁶ In that speech Malinovskii successfully appeased Khrushchev's views on military affairs and doctrine as well those more conservative, military professional officers. As a member of the Stalingrad Group, Malinovskii became part of the fracture within that core group of officers in the 1960s. He supported Khrushchev's military policies but was not as pliable as Khrushchev had hoped. Malinovskii increasingly showed that he put his military duty before his career aspirations under Khrushchev.

Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, Malinovskii again argued for the retention of conventional forces. At an internal military conference held in February 1963, Malinovskii stated that all forces must 'preserve and develop' conventional forces to be prepared for 'local non-nuclear wars.' Malinovskii discussed the need for conventional forces after the initial phase of a nuclear war. At the conference he stressed the need for conventional forces 'to eliminate the remnants of the enemy's forces and keep the captured territory under control.'⁴⁷ Malinovskii had supported the failed missile deployment to Cuba but had become increasingly cautious of Khrushchev's gambit and scheme. The sole reliance on nuclear weapons was a policy that not even a close confidant like Malinovskii could support anymore.

Conclusion

Khrushchev sought to place close confidants from his time as a member of various military council's during the Second World War, specifically at Stalingrad, in key command

⁴⁶ R. Ya. Malinovskii, *XXII s'yezd kommunisticheskoi partii sovet'skogo soyuza: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1962), 108-121.

⁴⁷ N.P. Kamanin, *Skrytii kosmos*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Infotekts-IF, 1997), 220. cited in Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire, The Soviet Union in the Cold War From Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 153.

posts in the military throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Khrushchev believed that Malinovskii, as a member of the Stalingrad Group would be a more pliable, supportive Minister of Defence than Zhukov had been. According to Khrushchev himself, if the decisions was based on military expertise and merit, Konev's name should be on a shortlist of who was to be the next Minister of Defence. However, Khrushchev also believed that little would change if an officer such as Konev, closely resembling Zhukov, were to be at the head of the Soviet armed forces. It was Khrushchev who made the choice of mediocrity over merit in that decision. Konev was a meritorious officer who upheld the ideals of military professionalism. While his service in WW II paralleled Malinovskii, Konev did not serve in direct contact with Khrushchev, which served to hinder his career in the 1950s and 1960s. His forced retirement was based on his lack of support toward Khrushchev's designs on military reform.

While he was supportive of Khrushchev's policies, Malinovskii was able to walk a fine line between Khrushchev and more conservative members of the Soviet high command. Malinovskii was never made a member of the Presidium thus, he did not have the same access to policy-making as Zhukov. He was invited to Presidium meetings when military council was sought. However, on average per year Malinovskii did not attend many Presidium meetings simply because he was not a member.

In the 1960s, Malinovskii increasingly argued for both the increased development of nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems and for the retention and strengthening modern conventional forces. Speaking before the Warsaw Pact forces, Malinovskii argued that conventional mechanised forces will play an integral role in modern warfare on a nuclear battlefield. Malinovskii was in a precarious position throughout the 1960s as he was head of the

armed forces and also a member of the Stalingrad Group that was becoming increasingly stratified. Malinovskii became a more moderate member of the Stalingrad Group who was less sycophantic than other officers who placed their position and career before their duty to the military as officers.

Chapter 4: The Soviet Military at Novochoerkassk

Years of Soviet bureaucratic secrecy and silence surround the events of the workers' uprising in Novochoerkassk, which took place from 1 to 3 June 1962. It was not until May 1989 that any investigation into the tragic means used to end the uprising was undertaken from within the Soviet bureaucratic system. After the implementation of Gorbachev's reforms, and the election of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies, opinions were voiced to open an investigation into the events of June 1962. It was under those auspices that the Chief Military Procurator of the Soviet Union carried out the investigation into the Novochoerkassk tragedy over the next several years. Shrouded in secrecy, the uprising in Novochoerkassk is an important case study of internal policies in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. It was an event which he did not 'remember' in his memoirs. What was the exact role of the Soviet armed forces, if any, in suppressing the Novochoerkassk uprising? We know that Soviet Army units of the North Caucasian Military District (NCMD) were sent to Novochoerkassk, along with internal troop units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). This chapter will illustrate the secondary role played by the Soviet army in supporting the MVD in suppressing the uprising on 2 June 1962. Herein it is argued that troops from the MVD fired into the crowd on 2 June, not those of the Soviet regular army.

Agents of both the CPSU Presidium and the Soviet army guided the decisions being made on the ground in Novochoerkassk. The structure of the Soviet party-state ceased to function well during those events. Tensions between the Presidium members sent to Novochoerkassk led to indecisiveness on a single course of action. Anastas Mikoyan served as the voice of calm reason as compared to Frol Kozlov's hard-lined approach for dealing with the revolt. The failure of

clear decision making by the Presidium allowed for the situation to become clouded. Sources point to various agents 'ordering' the crowd to be fired upon, if indeed any order was actually given. The crowd was fired upon on 2 June, but is unclear whether the Presidium members, in Novochoerkassk or in Moscow, or circumstances on Lenin square, led to that course of action being taken.

Officers are trained to follow the military chain of command. Thus it follows that orders directly given to military commanders on the ground by CPSU leaders were not followed. Those orders were followed once they were relayed to those same officers from Marshal Malinovskii and the Ministry of Defence. Resistance of provincial Party officials by the military was logical; but one those orders came from the military chain of command in Moscow, they were followed. Officers made decisions to followed those orders but in their own fashion, which is illustrated below by General Matvei Shaposhnikov and his dealings with the crowds crossing the Tuzlov Bridge on 2 June. General of the Army, Issa Pliyev, commander of the NCMD, made sure to follow the chain of command from Moscow. In this chapter and the following it will be argued that Pliyev's handling of the Novochoerkassk situation was a prime reason he was given overall command for Soviet Group of Forces sent to Cuba that same year. Despite a more experienced officer, especially when dealing with nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, available to take overall command, Khrushchev entrusted the Cuba military gambit to Pliyev, a friend from WWII, and someone he had trusted after Novochoerkassk.

The second question that this chapter addresses is the development of military professionalism within the Soviet Armed Forces and the impact of this on the actions of the Soviet military during the events in Novochoerkassk. Did the actions of Soviet army officers

represent their understanding of military professionalism? Had the Soviet armed forces developed a strong sense of professionalism, with the military as a professional caste, since the death Stalin? During the Khrushchev era, military officers increasingly felt a strong sense of *esprit de corps*. A more cohesive command structure was able to voice the military's purviews and walk a fine line in civil-military relations.

In a study published in 1983, William Fuller Jr., stated that the Soviet army was not assigned the duty to control internal disputes that arose between the CPSU and the Soviet government on one hand and the population on the other. He does, however, state that the internal troops of the MVD were tasked with carrying out an internal function 'relating to the control of dissatisfied elements in the population.'¹ Contrary to the work of Fuller is that of William Odom, specialist in civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. Odom, in his work on the disintegration of the Soviet armed forces, states that, 'during the entire post-1945 period, the Soviet military conducted combat operations almost exclusively against the peoples inside the Soviet camp,' and that an integral function of the regular military was the 'maintenance of communist parties' rule in countries where they already held power.'² Odom continues to state that the Soviet army was used as reinforcement for the internal troops of the MVD to put down domestic uprisings and protests in the USSR, giving as an example Novocherkassk in 1962.³ Odom argued that the primary function was to maintain the Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe as can be seen in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Internally, Odom argued that the Soviet military was used secondary to the MVD, only if needed. Mark Harrison supports

¹ William C. Fuller, Jr., *The Internal Troops of the MVD SSSR*, College Station Papers no.6, College Station, Texas: October 1983, 14.

² William Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 244.

³ Odom, *Collapse of the Soviet Military*, 245.

Fuller's characterisation of the role of the Soviet armed forces. During collectivisation Stalin and the OGPU knew an army of conscripts were not to be relied upon when it came to internal conflict with its own people.⁴

How to evaluate these studies, which show polar opposites on the role of the military at Novochoerkassk, is the primary task of this study. However, pinpointing the exact role of the regular military at Novochoerkassk is difficult. A primary hindrance to the study of the Soviet military is a lack of primary documentation, especially concerning the armed forces' role from military sources. Therefore, military information has been accessed from those archives of the Communist Party and the state that are available for research. Given the current status of archival work on defence and military issues in the Russian Federation, it may never be possible to pinpoint exactly the role of the Soviet army during the Novochoerkassk uprising in 1962. However, through those primary sources currently available, coupled with the secondary sources concerning the subject, the aim is to provide information about a period of Soviet history that warrants greater evaluation.

Dilemmas arise when researching Novochoerkassk. Files pertaining to the trials following the uprising are easily accessible; however, those of the Ministry of Defense or the General Staff are inaccessible. Documents that would provide insight into the operations of the Soviet armed forces in connection with the uprising in Novochoerkassk have not yet been made available. The lack of primary documentation from the Soviet military is a problem when researching events in Novochoerkassk; the problem will not be solved in the foreseeable future as access to this material remains closed. All information concerning the role of the military in Novochoerkassk is in the

⁴ Mark Harrison, editor, *Guns and Rubles: The Defense Industry in the Stalinist State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 11.

form given by those military personnel who were present in June 1962. There is the possibility, however, that these sources are biased in order to skew the events to present the interviewee in a better light.

Secondary sources debate the role of the Soviet military in suppression of the uprising in Novocherkassk. Two monographs which focus on Novocherkassk differ in their interpretations of the events and available archival sources. Samuel Baron's account is primarily based on an abbreviated, distilled version of the Chief Military Procurators findings from the early 1990s. He unabashedly acknowledges his liberal, in a political sense, bias when researching and writing his account of Novocherkassk. His research is supported by V.A. Kozlov, whose own work on uprisings in the post-Stalinist USSR has two chapters covering the events of June 1962. Kozlov led Baron to several key sources for his own work. Baron concludes that the military forces colluded with those of the MVD in suppressing the uprising, whereas Kozlov offers a different interpretation. While Kozlov's work reads as a fact sheet that the reader can use to formulate their own opinion of the events, Baron's reads as a biased indictment of the entire Soviet system. Kozlov argued that the most thorough, yet journalistic, accounts from Novocherkassk during the late Gorbachev years are useful for historians but must be read with a judicious eye for the bias of those who have lived throughout the events or have been told of the events from firsthand accounts of those repressed. Baron's account uses those same sources to validate his interpretation of the events. Below it is argued that while Baron has a grasp of events, his account is skewed by his own negative views of the Soviet system.

The Novocherkassk Uprising - Causes

The workers' uprising in Novocherkassk arose from a myriad of reasons. On 17 May 1962, the Central Committee approved a Council of Minister's proposal to raise the state purchase and sale price of basic foodstuffs, such as meat, milk and butter. Beginning on 1 June, the prices of meat and poultry were to increase by 35 percent, while the prices of milk and butter were to increase by 25 percent.⁵

Dissatisfaction with the decision was widespread throughout the Soviet Union. Leaflets circulated in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Chelyabinsk and Donetsk calling for workers' strikes to protest against the price increase. Students at Kiev State University protested, in solidarity with workers, against the price increases.⁶ As we know now, large-scale, and the most dramatic, resistance to the increase in prices occurred at the Novocherkassk Electric Locomotive Works named in honour of Budenny (NEVZ). The NEVZ factory employed 13,000 workers at the facility seven kilometres from the city of Novocherkassk, in the Rostov region.⁷ To make matters worse, on 1 January 1962, wages of the workers at NEVZ were lowered by 30 to 35 percent. This was due to an increased production target, meaning longer hours at the same pay.⁸ Workers'

⁵ "O reagirovanii naceleniya na reshenie TsK KPSS i soveta ministrov SSSR o nekotom povishenii tsen na miaco, miacnie produktie i maclo," GARF, f. 89, opis. 6, delo 11, Hoover Institution Archives. Erik Kulavig, *Dissent in the Years of Khrushchev: Nine Stories About Disobedient Russians* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 128. William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2003), 518. Taubman writes that the price increase made economic sense as consumer prices set by the state had never covered the cost of production of those foodstuffs.

⁶ GARF, f. 89, opis. 6, delo 11, Hoover Institution Archives. Reports from the KGB specifically mentioned the activities in Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Kazan, Dnepro-petrovsk, Kiev, Minsk, and Gorkii.

⁷ Samuel Baron, *Bloody Sunday in the Soviet Union: Novocherkassk 1962* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), ix.

⁸ Piotr Suida, 'The Novocherkassk Tragedy: 1-3 June 1962,' Russian Labor Review, 1988, [translated from the samizdat periodical *Obshchina*.] Suida was a worker at NEVZ and participant in the uprising. He was arrested early in the day on 2 June. In the subsequent trial he was given a 12-year sentence; he served four years and was released in 1966 when his mother made a personal appeal to Anastas Mikoyan. He worked the rest of his life to find the truth of the Novocherkassk tragedy.

take home pay, or real wages, decreased as they were now expected to work longer and produce more.

The uprising in Novocherkassk lasted from 1 June through to 3 June. Local militia and police units arrived at NEVZ after a significant number of workers gathered in the main courtyard demanding 'meat, milk and higher wages'. It was not until the evening of 1 June that the local militia, numbering approximately 220, arrived at NEVZ.⁹ They were turned away by the striking workers. Subsequent attempts by the militia and local garrison to enter NEVZ were unsuccessful, but thus far there had been no violent clashes between the local militia and police and the workers. The situation was greatly inflamed by the poor actions taken by the Party officials from the Rostov regional committee, the Novocherkassk City Committee, and the director of NEVZ, B.N. Kurochkin. Speaking to the protesting workers at the factory, Kurochkin's insensitive remarks fanned the flames of an already tense situation within the gates. A.P. Basov, the First Secretary of the Rostov regional Party organisation, merely restated the government decree on the price increases. These events sent the crowd into frenzy and sparked them to hurl objects at the balcony of the administrative building being used as a rostrum for the speakers.¹⁰ At that point the Party officials and administrative staff of NEVZ were captives within the administrative building. They were unable to leave through the ever-increasing crowd of workers.

The Role of the Soviet Armed Forces

⁹ Kulavig, *Dissent*, 138.

¹⁰ Vladimir Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalinist Years* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 238. Kurochkin taunted the crowd by suggesting, 'If there isn't enough money for meat and sausage, let them [the workers] eat pirozhki with liver'. Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, p. 26. For a detailed description of the events of 1 to 3 June 1962, see Kozlov's and Baron's writings on the subject.

The role of the military during the uprisings in Novocherkassk began in the late evening of 1 June. General of the Army, Issa A. Pliyev, was commander-in-chief of the North Caucasus Military District. Minister of Defence of the Soviet Union, Marshal R. Ya. Malinovskii, on Khrushchev's instructions, cabled Pliyev on 1 June and ordered him to ready his troops and concentrate them in and around Novocherkassk. V.A. Kozlov states that Malinovskii told Pliyev to: 'Raise a formation. Do not use tanks. Restore order. Give me a report.'¹¹ Pliyev and troops of the North Caucasus Military District arrived in Novocherkassk on the evening of 1 June.

Reports are varied on the interaction between the Communist Party and the military in the early stage of the events in Novocherkassk. Party officials made numerous calls to military commanders to bring forces to Novocherkassk. The calls were rebuffed repeatedly. Sergei Khrushchev writes that Rostov Party Secretary Basov called Colonel Shargorodskii and ordered him to re-impose order at NEVZ; Shargorodskii refused on the basis that he, and the military, were not subordinate to the provincial Party apparatus. Pliyev approved of Shargorodskii's actions in opposing the orders from the Party. Only after the orders came from Malinovskii, as stated above, did the Soviet armed forces take action and move into Novocherkassk.¹² Logically, the military were to only follow order passed down through the chain of command from the Ministry of Defence. While the orders were the same, they followed the proper chain of command and communication to those officers in Novocherkassk. The younger Khrushchev's research, relying on primary investigation sources from the time, illustrates how the military chain of command was followed throughout the events in June. Also illustrated in his work is

¹¹ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 239.

¹² Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 497.

the role of Party officials sent to Novocherkassk from Moscow. Andrei Kirilenko, member of the Presidium and First Secretary of the Sverdlovsk province committee, had been sent to Novocherkassk. When orders had been sent to the military from Kirilenko and not followed, he telephoned Moscow before Malinovskii ordered the movement of forces to the factory. Once again this illustrated that the chain of command was to be followed over the direct orders from CPSU officials in the city. Commanders such as Shargorodskii relied upon the chain of command and not orders from the Party officials directly. Below the same phenomenon will be explored in the case of Frol Kozlov.

Three thousand Soviet army troops arrived in Novocherkassk under the command of Pliyev. Immediately, the military took up positions at the gas depot, the city Party headquarters, police and KGB buildings, the bank, post and telegraph offices, and the radio station. General M.V. Shaposhnikov, Pliyev's second in command, ordered a curfew for the city, and he posted a military guard outside of NEVZ. Accounts differ as to the willingness of the military to become involved in an internal dispute between the Soviet state and its population. Throughout the three days the KGB maintained that 'officers and soldiers involved lacked determination and stood as if paralyzed.'¹³ V.A. Kozlov, S. Khrushchev, and Baron all give variations of the release of Party and factory officials at NEVZ.

On the heels of the arrival of the Pliyev's forces, over a hundred KGB operatives came to Novocherkassk. The Communist Party leadership sent Colonel-General Pyotr Ivashutin, the First Deputy Chair of the KGB, to Novocherkassk with the operatives. It was their task to infiltrate the workers gathered at NEVZ and to gather information on the ringleaders, taking note of who was

¹³ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 33.

making speeches, secretly taking photographs of those involved. The KGB operatives were dressed in plainclothes as workers.¹⁴ Reporting to the Presidium after the uprising, Frol Kozlov singled out the successful work of KGB Chairman Semichastnyi, Deputy Chair Ivashutin, and CC Secretary Shelepin in crushing the uprising. No military officers were mentioned, which is telling in the reports to the Presidium on who was responsible for the successful repression of the workers in Novocherkassk.¹⁵

When the Soviet armed forces arrived at NEVZ, the Party bosses from the region and the city, along with the factory administration, were still felt trapped within the factory, unwilling to venture out of the administration building. According to the account by V.A. Kozlov, it was the regular military units, operating alongside members of the KGB and army intelligence (the GRU), who rescued the men held up within the factory. Late in the evening on 1 June five trucks with soldiers and three armored personnel carriers arrived at the gates of the factory. They were not there to use force to suppress the strike but to free the Party bosses. The army units stopped short of the gate and took the verbal abuse from the workers while members of the KGB and the GRU liberated the hostages. The units at the gates were intended to distract the workers' attention while their counterparts safely retrieved the hostages without the use of weapons. At no point in this operation were weapons used against the hostile crowd.¹⁶ However, according to Sergei Khrushchev it was partly an airborne reconnaissance team from the 8th Division who successfully extracted the hostages from the administration building. Sergei Khrushchev goes further to say that those soldiers entered the factory in plain sight of the workers, who did not

¹⁴ Yurii Bagraev and Vladislav Pavliutkin, 'Novocherkassk, 1962-i: tragediya na ploshchadi,' *Krasnaya zvezda*, 7 October 1995, 7.

¹⁵ "Informatsiya t. Kozlova o sobitiiax v Novocherkasske," Protocol 35, 10 June 1962, *Arkhivi Kremlya*.

¹⁶ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 244.

molest them and let them carry out their mission.¹⁷ V.A. Kozlov and S. Khrushchev paint a similar picture of the military's role in extracting the officials. Each support the other in the primary details which allows us to say in all probability that the Soviet military provided the distraction for the real move to release those holed up in NEVZ.

Samuel Baron painted another picture of the events that led to the successful removal of the hostages from the administration building. According to Baron, orders were given to Pliyev from Kirilenko to send a force in strength to liberate Basov and the others from the factory grounds. Pliyev then ordered the commander of the 406th Tank Regiment, Colonel Mikheev, to go to NEVZ to carry out the order from Kirilenko. Thirty to forty troops accompanied Mikheev but were barred by the workers from entering the factory grounds. That contingent left NEVZ without incident. By the time another sortie to the factory was ordered by Kirilenko, under the command of General I. Oleshko, commanding officer of the Novocherkassk garrison, Basov and the other hostages had already been released by the combined operation of the KGB and military intelligence led by General M.V. Shaposhnikov.¹⁸ At that juncture, Shaposhnikov advised the striking workers to send a delegation to state their grievances and needs to the members of the CPSU CC Presidium who had arrived in Novocherkassk.¹⁹ Shaposhnikov was to play a key role in the events of the following day.

¹⁷ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*, 497.

¹⁸ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 46-7.

¹⁹ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 42-3. Khrushchev sent Frol Kozlov (Central Committee Secretary), Anastas Mikoyan (Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers, and a close trusted friend of Khrushchev), along with Polyansky, Kirilenko, Illichev, and Shelepin to Novocherkassk on 1 June 1962. Seminchastny (Chair of the KGB) and Shelepin (Central Committee Secretariat, Deputy Prime Minister) stated that they both had orders from Khrushchev to resist the use of arms and to work at all costs to end the strike peacefully.

The Role of Matvei Shaposhnikov, 2 June 1962

Shaposhnikov, awarded Hero of the Soviet Union for his service during World War II, played an integral role in the events of 2 June. Shaposhnikov was born in 1906 in Voronezh; he was university educated and had been a member of the Communist Party since 1930. He had been Deputy Commander of the North Caucasus Military District since 1960. Shaposhnikov was a vocal critic of the policies of Nikita Khrushchev, both with respect to the military as well as the Party. Despite the suffering the Soviet officer corps endured under Stalin, he believed more than anything that the XX Party Congress had hurt the image and standing of the Party. Shaposhnikov was a popular Stalinist in that sense; despite this, he believed in the rehabilitation of Stalin's victims.²⁰

Shaposhnikov became an outspoken political critic of Khrushchev's military policies, but shown above he was also a critic of Khrushchev's policies toward internal Party matters and ideology. Shaposhnikov disagreed with Khrushchev's military doctrine, specifically the sole reliance on strategic rocketry. He opposed troop reductions to the conventional forces, as well as budgetary and military expenditure cuts. He was of the opinion that nuclear weapons were nothing more than a diplomatic tool; perhaps in that respect he was very similar to Khrushchev.²¹ An officer of Shaposhnikov's stature, second in command of a provincial military district, did not have access to the CPSU and the leadership to voice his opinions and have his concerns taken up by the decision-making bodies of power. While the commanding officers of the Soviet

²⁰ Roger Reese, *Red Commanders: a Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991* (Lawrence, Kansas: 2005), 192.

²¹ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 129.

armed forces were asked to provide authoritative opinions on the military to the CPSU leadership, Shaposhnikov was seen as a dissident at best, espousing judgements that should remained his private thoughts.

After General Pliyev was given command of the Soviet Group of Forces in Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Shaposhnikov became Commander-in-Chief of the North Caucasus Military District. On Pliyev's return, he reverted to his former position as Deputy Commander. In 1966, he was transferred to the reserves.²² However, his misfortune was just beginning. On 7 September 1967, he was indicted on charges under Article 70 of the Soviet constitution, concerning anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. The indictment stated that Shaposhnikov, in July 1962, had 'prepared and preserved in his apartment an anonymous letter-appeal with anti-Soviet content,' and that he circulated various letters of protest against the Khrushchev regime under a pseudonym.²³ Only after an appeal to head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov, were the charges dismissed, but the damage had been done. Hero of the Soviet Union, General M.V. Shaposhnikov was expelled from the Communist Party.

That first night, when Shaposhnikov arrived at NEVZ, he explicitly ordered those under his command to unload their weapons.²⁴ There was to be no live ammunition. When General Pliyev arrived in Novochoerkassk he told Kirilenko that the Soviet army had no role to play in internal disputes between the population and the Soviet government. Its sole mission was to

²² GARF f. 8131, op. 36, d. 1808, cited in V.A Kozlov and S.V. Mironenko, editors, *Nadzornie proizvodstva prokuraturi SSSR po delam ob antisovetskoi agitatsii i propagande: annotirovannii katalog, mart 1953-1991* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii Fond 'Demokratiya', 1999), 683.

²³ Kozlov and Mironenko, *Nadzornie proizvodstva prokuraturi SSSR*, 683.

²⁴ Vladimir Fomin and Yuri Shchekochikhin, 'Togda v novochoerkasske,' *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 21 June 1989, 13. In the interview in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, Shaposhnikov stated that he tried to persuade Kozlov to order that troops and tanks not be provided with ammunition. Kozlov flatly rejected that notion stating that Pliyev and the military had their orders.

defend the Soviet Union against outside aggression from foreign foes. What was happening in Novocherkassk was the responsibility of the police and the MVD's security forces. Civil disorder did not fall under the purview of the Soviet army.²⁵ Both Shaposhnikov and Pliyev's actions on the night of 1 June illustrated the mindset of the military. Military professionalism had strengthened. Although the Soviet armed forces were created in the October Revolution as the Red Guards, with the sole aim of usurping and retaining power, they had developed into a modern professional army. The Party's hold on power was no longer in question, and the Soviet military strongly felt the time had well passed when it should be called upon to defend the Party and the state from an internal threat, especially at the height of the Cold War.²⁶

Events of 2 June 1962 - Clear Orders to Suppress the Crowd?

It was in that mindset that the Soviet military operated throughout the Novocherkassk uprising. Shaposhnikov and Pliyev were foremost military professionals; both felt that internal policing was not within the framework of a modern military. Shaposhnikov was to play a key role in the events the following day, 2 June 1962. Still in the morning of 2 June, the soldiers posted at NEVZ, under the command of Shaposhnikov, did not have live ammunition. However,

²⁵ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 46.

²⁶ By June 1962 the decision to place medium and intermediate range ballistic missile in Cuba had been made. The largest Soviet logistical, highly secretive, operation since World War II was being organized and carried out as events in Novocherkassk unfolded!

forces posted elsewhere, both regular military and troops of the internal forces of the MVD, were given live ammunition on the orders of Frol Kozlov.²⁷

The workers gathered at NEVZ on the morning of 2 June at 7:00 and were joined by 400 workers from the *Neftamash* works.²⁸ A decision was made that if the leaders of the Communist Party in Novocherkassk would not come to hear their complaints and grievances, then the workers would go to them. To reach the city centre the workers had to cross the Tuzlov River, which served as a natural border between the city and its industrial area. Estimates of the number of people marching to the city centre from NEVZ are anywhere from 5,000 to 12,000 citizens. The procession of workers, women and children has been described by V.A. Kozlov as a Leninist march; harkening back to the early days of the Soviet state to a more pure, untainted idea of Marxism-Leninism. Despite the column of workers marching to the city centre behind a large portrait of Lenin and red banners, the crowd became raucous and increasingly aggressive as drunks and loiterers joined the procession.²⁹ Semichastnyi believed the workers marching toward the city centre were joined by anti-Communist agitators from Moscow and Kursk.³⁰ Vadim Makarevsky, a member of Pliyev's staff, compared the procession to that of the workers marching on the Winter Palace in 1917; Baron compared the procession to that of 1905 led by Father Gapon, which ended in the events of Bloody Sunday.

²⁷ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 51-2. Shaposhnikov's men stood by when the workers at NEVZ stopped another train on the Saratov-Rostov line as they had the day before. No orders were given to the soldiers when workers broke down the gates between the factory and administration buildings.

²⁸ GARF, f. 89, opis, 6, delo 12, Hoover Institution Archives.

²⁹ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 259. Throughout the three days of protest there had always been a division among the workers. Some called for the peaceful protest while others thought more assertive measure needed to be taken such as taking control of key governmental and Party buildings in Novocherkassk.

³⁰ GARF, f. 89, opis 6, delo 12, Hoover Institution Archives.

Shaposhnikov positioned his units on the bridge over the Tuzlov River as ordered to by Pliyev.³¹ He was not to let the procession move into the city and was to stop it at the river. As he had done the previous night, Shaposhnikov made sure that the soldiers and tanks on the bridge were armed but had no ammunition. Despite the presence of armed forces across the span of the bridge, the workers continued their march. At this point the soldiers could have acted forcibly to stop the demonstration; however, Shaposhnikov had no desire to use force against the workers. His order not to distribute ammunition is a testament to that. The workers moved in and about the soldiers and tanks making their way across the river and into Novochoerkassk. They made their way through the shallow waters of the river or simply over and around tanks. At no time was there serious moves by the military to stop the procession even as workers climbed over and on tanks. The testimonial of one worker, Peter Suida, describes how individual soldiers even helped men and women climb onto and over the tanks blocking the way over the Tuzlov River.³² Shaposhnikov's reactions to events explicate the motives of an armed force cautious of using its power against its own citizens. Those actions exemplify the ideas put forth by Harrison, and that of the security forces, themselves that the Soviet military was not to be used against an internal conflict due to the fact the military could not be relied upon when tasked with fighting its own population.

In Novochoerkassk, the City Committee (*gorkom*) of the Communist Party had their offices in a building on Lenin Square. It was here that the final confrontation between the Party, the police, the KGB and the military was to occur. The Party leadership from Moscow, along

³¹ S. Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 498. Alongside regular military units of the North Caucasus Military District were cadets from the Rostov Military School, who had also been called to Novochoerkassk.

³² Suida, 'Novochoerkassk Tragedy.'

with Basov, were in the *gorkom* building. The workers had decided that if the Communist Party would not come to them at NEVZ to discuss their grievances, then they would go to the leadership. Once across the Tuzlov River, the demonstration turned towards Lenin Square. A small group of people, between 30 and 50, made the decision to go to the headquarters of the police and KGB, housed in the same building, to free the workers who had been arrested the previous night. E.P. Levchenka, a woman arrested on the night of 1 June, called for the workers to liberate their fellow workers from the police and KGB headquarters. Baron describes the events at the headquarters on 2 June; however, documents published in the early 1990s illustrate that already by 2 June those being held by the police and KGB had either been released or had been taken out of Novochoerkassk.³³ The misfortune of attempting to free workers who were no longer there had dire consequences and placed the workers and the Soviet army on a collision course.

Once at the KGB and police headquarters the workers continued to act very irrationally. The Soviet army had taken up positions in and around the key government office building, along with the 505th MVD Regiment, commanded by N.S. Malyutin. Worker Levchenka told the crowd that there was no chance that the soldiers could shoot all of the 30 to 50 workers converging on the building. The workers entered the building by force, as the soldiers fired a warning shot into the air. The troops inside the building fired another warning shot before one of the workers grabbed for a rifle. At that moment the soldier fired into the crowd. The workers fled into the courtyard, where more troops opened fire. In this exchange five workers were killed and 30 were arrested.³⁴ According to V.A. Kozlov, only one of the attackers was killed by the

³³ 'Novochoerkasskaya tragediya, 1962', *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 4, 1993, 152.

³⁴ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 59.

soldiers. In all the confusion of these events, N.S. Malyutin defended himself stating that he never gave orders to open fire on the protesting workers, and once he got a handle on the situation ordered those in the courtyard to stop firing their weapons.

In all the confusion at the KGB and police headquarters it was difficult to ascertain exactly who began shooting. Was it the regular army troops from Pliyev's divisions, or was it the internal troops of the MVD? Sources given divergent views of who fired, but more importantly they do not agree as to who actually gave an order to use force, if indeed an order was given. We can be certain that the incident was sparked by the forceful entry and subsequent behavior of the workers led by Levchenka. Loss of life had resulted, but the worst was about to happen on Lenin Square, where it has been estimated that from 50 to 100 people were killed when forces of the Soviet state opened fire on the crowd gathered in front of the gorkom building. Which troops shot into the crowd of thousands, not just workers, but their families, including women and children? Who gave the order to use deadly force? Did the order come from Moscow, from the leadership of the CPSU? Did this represent Khrushchev attempting to re-establish a sense of control after the thaw following the XX Party Congress?

Close to noon on 2 June, tanks and personnel carriers of the 18th Tank Division were brought into Lenin Square. General Ivan Oleshko commanded these forces; he was commander-in-chief of the Novocherkassk garrison. According to Sergei Khrushchev, Oleshko, [a former officer in the MVD](#), ordered the troops to form a semicircle between the *gorkom* building and the demonstrating workers.³⁵ However, both V.A. Kozlov and Baron, as a result of their research, challenge this version of events.

³⁵ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 499.

Baron states that Soviet army soldiers peacefully cleared the *gorkom* of any protesting workers. Then General Oleshko, not with regular army troops, but with 80 MVD internal forces soldiers, entered the square. They formed a semicircle in front of the *gorkom* building, and Oleshko took up a position on the balcony.³⁶ V.A. Kozlov's research has led him to a similar version of the events on Lenin Square. Under the command of Oleshko, MVD internal forces arrived on the square. Oleshko addressed the crowd, ordering them to disperse and return to work or home. One volley was fired over the heads of the gathered workers as a warning shot. Someone in the crowd on the square screamed, 'Don't be afraid, they are shooting blanks'.³⁷ After that was said, men from the crowd rushed towards the soldiers. Another warning shot was fired. A single shot third volley was fired directly into the crowd. Baron disagrees. He states that one warning shot was fired, and then Oleshko counted to three. On three, the soldiers under his command opened fire into the crowd and sustained their fire for three to four minutes.³⁸ However, Baron, through his research findings, has come to the conclusion that Oleshko never gave the order for the second, deadly volley of gunfire.³⁹ V.A. Kozlov strongly stated that Oleshko never gave the order to fire into the crowd; he stood from his vantage point on the balcony of the *gorkom* building ordering his troops to cease fire.⁴⁰

Sergei Khrushchev reiterates the position of V.A. Kozlov in his own work. According to Sergei Khrushchev, the soldiers fired into the crowd until they had spent all their ammunition,

³⁶ Baron states Pliyev personally chose General Oleshko to clear Lenin Square because he had former ties with the MVD.

³⁷ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 267.

³⁸ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 62-3.

³⁹ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 70.

⁴⁰ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 267.

but there had never been an order to open fire on the unarmed, predominantly peaceful, crowd. Kozlov stated that there was no evidence that the crowd moved forward to attack the soldiers or reach for their weapons.⁴¹ Conversely, William Taubman interviewed Vadim Makarevsky, an officer on Pliyev's staff, who does give evidence to the contrary. Makarevsky told Taubman that the shooting was accidental when protestors on the square moved forward and grabbed for the soldiers' rifles.⁴² However, central to this study is who fired those deadly shots: was it the Soviet army or the MVD internal forces? Can this question be answered?

A recent fictional account of the events in Novocherkassk was written by Francis Spufford. In *Red Plenty*, Spufford, based on secondary source research, paints a picture where Soviet army soldiers are on the ground in the square, while troops from the MVD are positioned on the roofs covering the square. As the army soldiers fired warning shots into the air, the MVD troops fired down into the crowd, expending all their ammunition.⁴³ Immediately before this happened, fictionalized army soldiers swear seeing plain-clothed MVD and KGB officers leaving the crowd. While this is a fictional account, Spufford builds the scene around Lenin Square. The reader can visualize the geographic and architectural feel of the square.

Roger Reese bluntly stated that internal troops of the MVD fired the deadly shots into the crowd on 2 June 1962. Further, Reese asserted neither Shaposhnikov nor Oleshko would have ordered their men to fire into an unarmed crowd of Soviet citizens.⁴⁴ Baron offers two different scenarios for what may have occurred on Lenin Square. Captain V.P Chetverikin, a member of

⁴¹ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 268.

⁴² Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 522.

⁴³ Francis Spufford, *Red Plenty* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 198-99.

⁴⁴ Roger Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience* (London: Routledge, 2000), 141.

the intelligence battalion in the 18th Tank Division, stated that some regular army soldiers were involved that day.⁴⁵ However, Chetverikin's post as an intelligence officer gives more support for a cooperative operation between military intelligence, the MVD and the KGB. Perhaps certain units, and even certain officers, were chosen to take part in the operation Lenin Square. Baron's conclusion is that the KGB, the MVD and to a small extent the regular army carried out the operation clearing Lenin Square in front of the gorkom building. Thus, the MVD and other intelligence agencies of the Soviet state played a much greater role than the Soviet army in the violent end to the uprising in Novocherkassk. The MVD and KGB sent divisions of internal troops and operatives to Novocherkassk. Evidence shows that MVD forces were on Lenin Square when the workers were shot. Officers and troops in the MVD were more predisposed to handling internal disputes of the state. It was their main function, unlike that of the Soviet armed forces.

V.A. Kozlov stated that the use of weapons was not motivated by any need for a policing action but was more a political necessity.⁴⁶ This is certainly a valid statement, especially when taken in retrospect and hindsight looking at the whole of the Khrushchev era. Already by the early 1960s, Khrushchev had decided that de-Stalinisation had gone too far. He had lost control of it somewhat. Also, through de-Stalinisation, Khrushchev had lost the one tool the Soviet state used to maintain compliance with the system, coercion. Novocherkassk represented a re-imposition of coercive measures. Dmitri Volkogonov stated that Novocherkassk 'was the Stalinist accompaniment to Khrushchev's reforms'.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, there is an opaque sheet over

⁴⁵ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 72-3.

⁴⁶ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 268.

⁴⁷ Dmitri Volkogonov, *Autopsy for an Empire: the Seven Leaders Who Built the Soviet Regime* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 215.

the events in Novocherkassk. Uncertainty over an order to repress the revolt with force exists still. While V.A. Kozlov and Volkogonov see a change in Khrushchev's policies in Novocherkassk, Baron argued that those hard-line members of the Presidium in Novocherkassk, such as Frol Kozlov, likely ordered the use of force. No clear consensus can be made to date. There is no discussion of the use of force, certainly no decision to sanction the use of force, in the Presidium minutes published in recent years.

There were many reports of non-Russian, non-Slavic, military units being brought into Novocherkassk.⁴⁸ Certainly there were non-Russian soldiers in the North Caucasus Military District solely based on its geographic location. Further accounts by Boiter and Solzhenitsyn, cited by Charles Ziegler, tell of ethnic Russian, Slavic, troops brought in to Novocherkassk, after 2 June, to replace the troops from the Caucasus.⁴⁹ 'Although the army could be relied upon to suppress revolt in the satellite nations of the Eastern bloc, its willingness to kill Slavic Soviet citizens was not assured.'⁵⁰ Moreover, Suida argued that the soldiers at the police and KGB building and on Lenin Square were soldiers from the Caucasus and not of ethnic Russian origin.⁵¹ No longer could the Communist Party look to the Soviet armed forces to quell an internal uprising; no longer were the Soviet armed forces to be the coercive baton of Soviet power.

By the 1960s, there was already widespread dissatisfaction within the Communist Party with Nikita Khrushchev. Popular dissatisfaction with Khrushchev increased at the same time,

⁴⁸ Albert Boiter, 'When the Kettle Boils Over...', *Problems of Communism*, vol. 13, no.1, January-February 1964, 37.

⁴⁹ Charles Ziegler, 'Worker Participation and Worker Discontent in the Soviet Union,' *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 98, no. 3, 1983, 248.

⁵⁰ Reese, *Soviet Military Experience*, 141.

⁵¹ Suida, 'Novocherkassk Tragedy.'

especially after the incident in Novocherkassk. According to one report, for the citizens of the Soviet Union, Novocherkassk epitomized the failure of Khrushchev to forge an alliance with the masses, an alliance necessary to garner support for his ill-conceived reforms.⁵² By introducing the Soviet army into Novocherkassk, the Soviet government provoked a strong reaction from the gathered masses. Not one person gathered at NEVZ, marching over the Tuzlov River or gathered on Lenin Square believed that 'their' Soviet army would fire at its own people. V.A. Kozlov's work on this aspect of the Novocherkassk uprising illustrates how the Soviet government predetermined the 'socio-psychological' shape of events in Novocherkassk.⁵³

Up to 300 citizens were arrested in the search for the key individuals who led the protests. A few days after the shooting on Lenin Square, 146 ringleaders remained in custody awaiting trial. Found guilty, many were sent far from Novocherkassk. Despite amnesties earlier in the Khrushchev period, the penal camp system was still in use against peoples deemed to be politically harmful to the Soviet state. Those convicted of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda were sent to the Komi ASSR.⁵⁴ Of the 14 who were brought to a show trial in Novocherkassk in the succeeding days, seven were given death sentences.⁵⁵ To this day we do not have an accurate figure for those killed at Novocherkassk. Figures from the Chief Military Procurator's investigation into Novocherkassk, carried out on the orders of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies

⁵² Alexei Adzhubei, *Te deysat let*, Moscow, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 1989, 283.

⁵³ Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings*, 249-50. Kozlov showed how, in films, the Soviet masses associated tanks and the use of force with fascism. Soviet propaganda had used World War II as the basis of showing how the Nazis use of force was brought to bear against the Soviet Union. That propaganda was turned against the Soviet State at Novocherkassk. In the eyes of the masses, the Communist Party and the government became the enemies of the people. Kozlov quotes one worker from Novocherkassk, Grigorii Katkov, as saying, 'Good God! So this is how they satisfy the requests of the laboring masses', when Katkov saw tanks and armoured personnel carriers entering the city.

⁵⁴ Suida, 'Novocherkassk Tragedy.'

⁵⁵ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 522.

in the early 1990s, state that 25 people were killed, more than 50 wounded, and over 20 more were injured in the rush to leave the square.⁵⁶

Immediately after the events, Generals Shaposhnikov and Oleshko were not punished for any actions they had taken in the three-day uprising. As stated above, Shaposhnikov replaced Pliyev, when the former was given the post of commander-in-chief of the Soviet Group of Forces in Cuba. General Oleshko was stationed to the Far East as a deputy corps commander. Later he went on to be an instructor at the General Staff Academy.

Pliyev's new command illustrated that Khrushchev was keen to promote mediocrity over experienced officers who had served with distinction in their commands.⁵⁷ Pliyev was a controversial choice for commander of a Soviet Group of Forces, especially one stationed in Cuba, which resulted in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Firstly, Pliyev was an artillery officer by training. Fursenko and Naftali argue that he was given preference of command in Cuba because of his handling of Novocherkassk. Pliyev was also known personally by Khrushchev and the Minister of Defense, Marshal Malinovskii. Dmitri Volkogonov posited that Pliyev was a last minute replacement as commander in Cuba over P. Dankevich, who was the choice of the military high command for overall commander in Cuba. Volkogonov stated that was because of Pliyev's role in Novocherkassk.⁵⁸ Baron argued that posting Pliyev to Cuba was a way to ameliorate the public in Novocherkassk and the surrounding areas. According to Baron, public

⁵⁶ Bagraev and Pavliutkin, 'Novocherkassk, 1962-i'.

⁵⁷ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *'One Hell of a Gamble': Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997), 193.

⁵⁸ Volkogonov, 238

opinion of Pliyev was that he was a murderer of innocent workers. Thus, Baron believed his move to Cuba was to appease the public.⁵⁹

The local Communist Party and NEVZ officials fared much worse than the military commanders. Basov, the first secretary of Rostov region, was removed from his post and joined the diplomatic corps. On 4 June, Kurochkin, the director of NEVZ, was relieved of his post. P.A. Abroskin replaced him; Abroskin was director at NEVZ in the 1950s, he was well-liked, and worked for improvements in the conditions of the workers.⁶⁰ For its part, the KGB laid the blame for the outcome of events at the feet of the Soviet military. On 4 June 1962, Semichastnyi reported to Khrushchev grumblings from the military. Semichastnyi told Khrushchev of ‘unhealthy utterances’ coming from the military. According to Semichastnyi, the military were blaming Khrushchev’s cult of personality for the woes of Soviet society. Soldiers were overheard stating that under Stalin at least prices had remained stable if not reduced. Semichastnyi finally reported that the military were heard to say: ‘if the people were to revolt now, we would not try to put them down.’⁶¹ These were outright political statements made by the rank and file members of the Soviet armed forces. Disenchantment with Khrushchev’s policies on the military were spreading from the divided officer corps in Moscow to those living barracks life. The Communist Party leadership remained cemented in their position on the price increases. The

⁵⁹ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 89. I disagree with Baron; in their actions after Novocherkassk, the Communist Party made no attempt to change the public’s view of the events, nor did they rescind the price increases, which would have greatly improved the Party’s standing in the eyes of the workers.

⁶⁰ Baron, *Bloody Sunday*, 88.

⁶¹ ‘Zapiska predsedatel’ya komiteta gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri sovete ministrov SSSR V.E. Semichastnogo pervomu sekretariyu TsK KPSS N.S. Khrushchevu’, in *Neizvestnaya Rossiya XX vek*. Tom. III, V.A. Kozlov (ed) (Moscow: Istoricheskoe Nasledie, 1993), 166-9.

leadership took no blame for what happened in Novocherkassk. Khrushchev blamed everyone but himself. He stated it was the ‘local idiots [who] started shooting.’⁶²

The interaction among the top Party leadership in Novocherkassk can only be described as tense. There was a natural division within the group. Kozlov and Kirilenko were allied together in their almost Stalinist, staunch, conservative outlook on the situation in Novocherkassk. Novocherkassk represented a clear problem of leadership in the USSR. The CPSU Presidium failed to take a clear line of action. One could argue that Kozlov and Kirilenko represented a ‘local’ focus of political power versus Moscow during the crisis. Neither the members on the ground in Novocherkassk, nor those in Moscow, were providing clear guidance to a plan of action against the uprising. When Frol Kozlov arrived in the city he took control of the Party apparatus, the militia and police, and believed he could control the army. However, as I have already stated, Pliyev and his staff ardently stood by their military professionalism and took orders only through the military chain of command, with Minister of Defence Marshal Malinovskii at the apex of that structure.⁶³ Frol Kozlov believed force should be used to crush the striking workers back into submission. Sergei Khrushchev quoted Kozlov as stating that, ‘weapons should be used. A thousand people should be placed in railroad cars and removed from the city.’⁶⁴ As we can see from the interaction between Kirilenko and Pliyev on the first night in Novocherkassk, the latter was ready to use brute force to rescue the Party and factory officials

⁶² Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 522. Novocherkassk is a benchmark event in Khrushchev’s tenure at the head of the Communist Party and Council of Ministers, if not in his lifetime. Yet, he never covers the subject in his memoirs. Sergei Khrushchev argues that the events of Novocherkassk tormented his father until his death.

⁶³ However, Marshal Malinovskii did take his orders from the Communist Party Central Committee Presidium, headed by Nikita Khrushchev. If Kozlov wanted a particular order to be given to the army in Novocherkassk, all he had to do was start at the top, that is have the head of the Party tell the head of the Soviet Armed Forces to order his men into action.

⁶⁴ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 498.

holed up in the factory's administration building. However, according to Sergei Khrushchev, his father ordered Shelepin and Kirilenko to end the standoff with the workers through peaceful solution. Throughout the three day uprising, Shelepin and Anastas Mikoyan were the stalwarts; they were always looking for a peaceful end to the Novocherkassk uprising. Mikoyan wanted to go to the workers and discuss their grievances with them. Kozlov vetoed that move. There was to be no negotiation with the anti-Soviet agitators. What is clear is that the decision-making mechanisms of the Presidium failed to function during the Novocherkassk uprising.

Military Professionalism

S.E. Finer, in his work on civil-military relations, wrote that military intervention can act against the wishes of the government, or the military may refuse outright to act when called upon by its own government. Being asked to fire against its own citizens, the Soviet army acted just as Finer predicted and acted against the wishes of the Soviet government and Communist Party. What is important to remember here is Finer is discussing the professional, standing army, as distinct from those forces of the MVD. Reese states that Novocherkassk 'reflect[ed] the growing professionalism of the army in that it rebelled against being used as a police force, and until the late 1980s the regime refrained from putting the army in such a position again.'⁶⁵ For Finer, any society must be based on the premise of civil supremacy. As military professionalism develops, the military consciously views itself as servants of the state rather than the government in power.⁶⁶ Certainly by 1962, the military viewed itself as a profession, a separate caste of Soviet

⁶⁵ Reese, *Soviet Military Experience*, 141.

⁶⁶ S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: the Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), 25.

society. Marshal Zhukov had seen to it that this was the case, and his successors within the Soviet high command had continued that process. Above all the military was to fight a foreign enemy, not to act as an internal control. Finer went on to discuss the Soviet Union in depth, stating the Soviets were ‘extremely careful not to use the armed forces as an internal police force; instead it has established hand-picked troops, the MVD regiments, for all such repressive work.’⁶⁷

Mark Harrison argues that the Soviet military was ‘naturally adapted to meet the foreign threat, while repression could neutralize the threat at home.’⁶⁸ Since 1930, Stalin was against using the Soviet military for suppressing domestic uprisings and domestic enemies. In decree no. 44/21 of 2 February 1930, the OGPU set out procedures for the “liquidation of the kulaks as a class” by arresting and imprisoning or deporting hundreds of thousands of people from the countryside. It warned the local secret police organisations “in no circumstances to involve units of the Red Army in the operation.”⁶⁹ Thus, by calling for military intervention in Novocherkassk, the Party leadership in 1962 went against precedents set over 30 years earlier. Harrison continued that Stalin’s reasoning was simple, the Soviet Army was composed of men and women from all strata in society. Can they be trusted when asked to go into conflict with their own people?⁷⁰ For exactly this reason, Caucasian troops under Pliyev’s command were not sent to Novocherkassk. Stalinist dictum was half-heartedly followed; nonetheless, the military strongly believed internal, domestic threats were clearly outside the purview of its operating parameters.

⁶⁷ Finer, *Man on Horseback*, 105.

⁶⁸ Mark Harrison, 10-11.

⁶⁹ Harrison, 10-11.

⁷⁰ Harrison, 10-11.

The founder of the Soviet state, Vladimir Lenin, agreed on the primary task of a regular standing army. Lenin argued in 1903 that a Russian state ruled by social democrats needed no standing army for defence or protection. Lenin stated, “a standing army is an army that is divorced from the people and trained to shoot down the people.” “If the soldier were not locked up for years in barracks and inhumanely drilled there, would he ever agree to shoot down his brothers, the workers and the peasants?”⁷¹ Writing in 1905, Lenin stated: ‘In every State, everywhere, a standing army serves as a tool against the internal enemy rather than against an external one. Everywhere it turns into a tool of reaction, serving capital against the toilers, a hangman strangling the liberty of the people on the gallows...’⁷² Prior to 1917-1918, Lenin had argued against a standing army and for the abolition of the tsarist Imperial Army. Nevertheless, once he had taken power with the Bolsheviks, he was a staunch supporter of a standing army because one was needed to maintain the sovereignty and security of the newborn Soviet state. Capitalism and imperialism were the enemies of the new Soviet state from which a standing army was to protect against. That threat had not passed in the 1950s and 1960s. Only then, Khrushchev argued capitalist and communist societies could economically and culturally compete rather than by military means.

Khrushchev’s Cold War rhetoric made necessary a strong, modern, standing army. Lenin was opposed to the idea of a regular standing army used for the internal control of the state; thus, it was a founding tenet of the first socialist state, which Khrushchev, as an avowed pure Leninist, should not have forgotten and put the Soviet army in a position where it had to choose between

⁷¹ Vladimir Lenin, “What Improvements are the Social-Democrats Striving to Obtain for the Whole People and for the Workers?” *Collected Works*, vol. 6 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1961), 401-402.

⁷² Cited in: Yosef Avidar, *The Party and the Army in the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1983), 9-10.

military professionalism and subservience to the state. Lenin quickly saw the necessity for a traditional, standing army in 1917 to combat against the new state's external enemies, as well as an internal security force, the *Cheka*, to fight against internal enemies of the Bolsheviks.

Stanislav Andreski, in *Military Organization and Society*, wrote that “so long as the government retains the loyalty of the armed forces, no revolt can succeed.”⁷³ Certainly the uprising at Novocherkassk was crushed with violence. The Soviet armed forces remained loyal to the regime from its inception in October/November 1917 until the final day of the regime in 1991. However, the Soviet armed forces became a strong professional military during the 1950s and 1960s. Released from the Stalinist stranglehold on military professionalism, the Soviet armed forces strongly believed their role was not as an internal policing unit but to defend the Soviet Union from an outside aggressor. The officers at Novocherkassk—Pliyev, Shaposhnikov, and Oleshko—argued time and time again that the military had no role to play in suppressing the uprising, even though this role was being thrust upon them by the Communist Party. Shaposhnikov's individual action at the gates of NEVZ on 1 June, and at the Tuzlov River bridge the following morning, illustrated the lengths to which the military was willing to go to limit their role in the containment of the workers. Without Shaposhnikov's actions, the death toll would have been considerably higher.

An interview with General Shaposhnikov was published in *Komsomol'skaya pravda* on 2 June 1989.⁷⁴ The interview caught the eye of the Dean of the Law Faculty of Leningrad University, Anatoly Sobchak. It was Sobchak and other members of the soon to be Congress of Peoples' Deputies who called for a formal government investigation into the events of

⁷³ Stanislav Andreski, *Military Organisation and Society* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 71.

⁷⁴ Yurii Bespalov and Valerii Konovalov, 'Novocherkassk, 1962,' *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 2 June 1989.

Novocherkassk. The Chief Military Procurator's office carried out that investigation. Despite the investigation being carried out during Gorbachev's *glasnost*, the findings were inconclusive on this issue of which forces fired upon the crowd gathered on Lenin Square. The verdict, however, does place the blame for the outcome directly on the shoulders of Khrushchev and the Party leadership, as follows:

Materials of the investigation allow one to conclude that the decision made on the spot by members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU to use firearms was not agreed upon beforehand with Khrushchev. As already noted, initially Khrushchev was against the use of extreme measures. Then, as the situation deteriorated, he began to demand that order be restored by any method up to the use of weapons—however, with the proviso: if the government offices are seized.⁷⁵

Thus, from the findings of the investigation, one can conclude that the use of force was approved by Khrushchev in the event that the government offices came under assault. However, the final decision was in the hands of the Communist Party officials, Frol Kozlov, Kirilenko, Shelepin, and Mikoyan. It was their decision when force was necessitated by the actions of the striking workers.

More strikingly, in all the reports sent from KGB Chairman Semichastnyi, there was no mention of military force being used against the protesting crowds. His reports from the first two days were concerned with the size of the demonstrations and their actions.⁷⁶ Semichastnyi's reports specified numerous workers leading the demonstrations but never a military officer nor military response. On 2-3 June, the KGB was aware of protests against the price increases and news that seeped out of Novocherkassk, which occurred in Moscow, Kursk, Riga, and Minsk. Amy Knight has done extensive work on the interactions the Party, the KGB and the military,

⁷⁵ Bagraev and Pavlyutkin, 'Novocherkassk, 1962-i'.

⁷⁶ GARF, f. 89, opis. 6, delo, 11,12, 13, Hoover Institution Archives.

within a power triangle. Knight argued that the KGB acts on behalf of the government and Party, protecting it from society, while the military protects the government and population from external threats. At the apex of the triangle is the CPSU. At the base, one corner is represented by the military and the other the KGB.⁷⁷ The interaction along the vertices determines which agency is in favour with the Party. Throughout the Khrushchev era, Knight saw the rise of the military at the expense of the KGB. It was the purview of the KGB and MVD to carry out operations against internal threats to Soviet power. Semichastnyi could only benefit from the security services' successful operations in Novocherkassk. How Shaposhnikov was handled after 1962 further illustrated a push-pull between the military and security forces. In an interview with *Argumenty i fakty* in 1989, Semichastnyi argued that the KGB alone played the central role in the removal of Khrushchev from power in October 1964.⁷⁸

Military professionalism achieved great status while Khrushchev was in power. However hard he tried to rein the military under the control of the Party, the military resisted. Individual agents spoke out against the policies Khrushchev advocated for the military. This chapter argued that while General Shaposhnikov disliked the use of force in Novocherkassk, he became a vocal critic of Khrushchev's military policies, criticisms that led to his dismissal. There is no concrete evidence to prove that the military did not play some role in the events at Novocherkassk. We can argue that the MVD did participate in the shooting of Soviet civilians on Lenin Square. There has been no evidence to suggest who ordered the suppression of the worker uprising in Novocherkassk, nor if an order from the CPSU was ever given. Sources given an unclear

⁷⁷ Amy Knight, "The KGB and Civil-Military Relations," in Timothy Colton and Thane Gustafson, editors, *Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 93-103.

⁷⁸ *Argumenty i fakty* no. 20 (1989): 5.

picture, especially on the role of the Presidium in June 1962. Dithering on the part of the Presidium created an opaque decision-making organ in those vital moments. No clarity on control of the situation or what officials were deputized to issue direct orders from Moscow existed. Despite this, there is enough evidence from participants, both military as well as worker participants, to conclude that the Soviet armed forces acted with a sense of military professionalism throughout the events of 1 to 3 June 1962. Officers refused to issue live ammunition to their soldiers and even helped the marchers cross into the city. Upholding the tradition that the military was to be used solely against external threat to Soviet power, the armed forces provided support and ancillary services to the main aggressor at Novocherkassk-the security forces of the MVD, GRU, and KGB. However, Pliyev garnered support from Khrushchev. Khrushchev choice of Pliyev to command all Soviet forces being sent to Cuba clearly illustrates the idea of the choice of personalities, the choice of agents. Khrushchev chose a mediocre officer who was familiar with from WWII, and had fared well at Novocherkassk, over an officer with greater expertise in nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems. Novocherkassk charts the rise in opinions by the Soviet military, the rise in a sense of professional service, but also it showed how Khrushchev was willing to chose mediocrity over merit.

Chapter 5: The Soviet High Command and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov divide the Cold War into two distinct phases. According to Zubok and Pleshakov, “the Cold War of bipolar brinksmanship had begun amid the blooming linden trees of Berlin in 1948 and ended in the green waters of the Caribbean in 1962.”¹ It was toward the end of first tense period of the Cold War that the world was on the brink of a nuclear exchange. When Khrushchev sent nuclear ballistic missiles to Cuba, the Soviet military was called upon to carry out a logistical feat unmatched since the days of World War II. This chapter discusses the motives for sending missiles to Cuba, the decision-making process before and during the crisis, and how and in what role the Soviet military, specifically the Soviet high command, participated in the decision-making processes of the Cuban Missile Crisis. This chapter looks at the duties of military in their official capacity as consultants and advisors to the Presidium as well as their deference to political authority in decisions made by Khrushchev and the Party leadership. Which participants of the inner circles of decision-making were selected and how was this decision made? How involved were leading officers, such as Marshals Malinovskii, Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union, and Matvei Zakharov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff? The Cuban ‘gambit’ further illustrated the fractioning of the Stalingrad Group after the removal of Zhukov. The cracks in the military leadership were created during the debates on military doctrine and strategy after the removal of Zhukov, and grew wider after

¹ Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 7. “Multilateral permanent truce” is the term used by the authors to describe the period of the Cold War from 1962 to 1989.

the 1960 discussions on further conventional military reductions. To what extent was the Soviet military command consulted by Khrushchev and the leadership of the CPSU before and during the crisis? Was the military command consulted prior to Khrushchev making his decision to send missiles to Cuba? Finally, what were the commanders' reactions to those decisions?

The reactions of a minority of the Stalingrad Group were to question the necessity of the deployment; those questions led to two officers being dismissed and replaced with more compliant counterparts. In the case of Marshal Moskalenko, questioning the rationale and feasibility of sending ballistic missiles to Khrushchev represented a political move by the military, and a line that was not to be crossed. Khrushchev understood Moskalenko had moved from advising to attempting to make policy decisions and replaced the Marshal with an officer that would carry out his duties to the Party and the state. A sense of consensus then developed within the Ministry of Defence and General Staff.

Throughout the development and implementation of the plan to station ballistic missile in Cuba, officers did voice concerns and express dissenting opinions. It was the Party's and Khrushchev's reaction to any defensive or questioning opinions by military officials, which moved beyond a consultancy role that illustrated the idea of the selection of agents. It also showed that the military command established Khrushchev, perceived to be compliant and in lock step, was not always in line with him. The command group built by Khrushchev after October 1957 had indeed fractured. Through the 1960s, as officers questioned his policies, Khrushchev was forced to change the composition of his military leadership. While the structures, the Party Presidium and the military establishment remained in the same relationship their interaction changed as Khrushchev tweaked the leading commanders of the armed forces.

The political reactions to those opinions were telling as to how Khrushchev viewed the expert analysis and concerns of the military.

By 1962, Khrushchev had successfully combined in himself the positions of First Secretary of the CPSU and Chairman of Council of Minister of the Soviet Union. He had further strengthened his hold on the Party with his defeat of the Anti-Party Group in 1957, and tightened his control over the military when he dismissed Marshal Zhukov from his post of Minister of Defense. In October 1957, Malinovskii replaced Zhukov as Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union. The move against Zhukov showed Khrushchev's attempt to rein in the military command after having successfully moved against the security services in 1953 and his detractors in the Party in 1955. In 1962, Marshal Zakharov was Chief of the Soviet General Staff—a position he held since 1960. Marshal Sergei Biryuzov commanded the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF), replacing Moskalenko in April 1962. Khrushchev perceived the selection of Moskalenko as flawed by 1962 when the officer spoke out against Khrushchev's plans. The replacement illustrated the notion of the selection of personality on the idea of service to Khrushchev rather than merit in that Biryuzov quickly upheld Khrushchev's ideas for Cuba. These three officers, Malinovskii, Zakharov, and Biryuzov, were integral in the planning mechanisms of the Soviet military. Together they had one significant similarity. They all owed their postwar promotions and positions to the patronage of Khrushchev. Malinovskii, Zakharov, and Biryuzov were all members of the so-called 'Stalingrad Group,' and in 1955, were promoted by Khrushchev. That group of officers had served as military commanders at the battle of Stalingrad during World War II where Khrushchev served as a political officer at that battle and throughout the push from Stalingrad westward against the German *Wehrmacht*. Relationships were molded then among

these officers and Khrushchev. The reconstruction of the commanding echelons of the Soviet military after Zhukov's ouster led to the "first truly homogenous group ever to rule over the Soviet armed forces."²

Historians must not understate the importance of such a cohesive military establishment, which owed their advancement in office to Khrushchev. Khrushchev, after the ouster of Zhukov, surrounded himself with competent military men, but they tended to be 'yes-men.' Khrushchev chose officers on the selection of personality rather than merit; he chose compliant officers whose counsel would support his machinations for the Soviet armed forces. The example of the planning for the Cuban missile deployment further illustrates this position. Little by little, men appointed by Zhukov were replaced with those from the 'Stalingrad Group.' Although militarily competent, men such as Malinovskii, Zakharov, and Biryuzov were intent on serving Khrushchev and maintaining their positions rather than serving the motherland in the Soviet Union's best interests. Consequently, Khrushchev was given advice by his commanders that they believed he wanted to hear in order to cement them in their positions at the top the military hierarchy. It was out of personal loyalty rather than professional military expertise that Malinovskii, Zakharov, and Biryuzov counseled Khrushchev. These officers' counsel was skewed to support Khrushchev's plan for Cuba. With their military education and experience, which those officers forgot during 1962, they should have counseled against surreptitiously deploying missiles to Cuba. However, at key moments in the crisis, dissenting opinions were

² John Erickson, "The 'Military Factor' in Soviet Policy," *International Affairs* 39. No. 2 (April 1963): 219. Other members of the 'Stalingrad Group' include Marshal Vasily Chuikov (1962- Commander, Soviet Ground Forces, Deputy Minister of Defense), Marshal Andrei Grechko (1962- Commander-in-Chief Warsaw Pact Forces), Marshal Nikolai Krylov (1962- Commander Moscow Military District), Marshal Kirill Moskalenko (1962- Commander Strategic Rocket Forces and Deputy Minister of Defense until April, then Chief Inspectorate in the Ministry of Defense and Deputy Minister of Defense. From 1962, Army General Aleksei Epishev headed the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army—he served as a member of the Front Military Council at Stalingrad.

voiced from within the Soviet high command as discussed above. Even Malinovskii was unwilling to escalate the situation as will be illustrated below. In that way institutional lines between the government and its military advisors became blurred.

However, despite the cohesive command framework among the military command and Khrushchev, problems arose. Roger Reese argues that “Khrushchev had a contentious relationship with the officer corps throughout his tenure as general secretary of the Communist Party.”³ Because he was committed to a peaceful foreign policy, *détente*, and a strengthened civilian economy, Khrushchev often was at loggerheads with his officers. His policies called for a smaller military establishment; thus, pitting himself against the proud, patriotic, and dutiful Soviet officer corps. Officers within the Stalingrad Group took positions against or supporting Khrushchev’s Cuban gambit. Fractures that first came into view over doctrine and policies in early 1960s (as discussed in Chapter 1), broke open over Cuba. Some officers sacrificed their careers for their sense of professionalism, while others were more easily persuaded by Khrushchev to disregard their institutional expertise, which was one of the key facets of professionalism according to Huntington. Nonetheless, it was a sense of advise and consult. Khrushchev and the Party had already come to a decision on the deployment; the officers were consulted after the initial political decision and were given a task to complete, not questions whether or not it was viable.

The Decision

³ Roger Reese, *Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 184.

Why did Khrushchev send missiles to Cuba? Since the Cuban revolution occurred in 1959, the Soviet Union had been sending conventional arms, mostly via the satellite countries of Poland and Czechoslovakia, to Castro's Cuba. As late as March 1962, the Soviet Union was facilitating these sales as well as the shipment of other industrial necessities, such as stainless steel.⁴ However, in July 1960, Khrushchev spoke of extending the Soviet nuclear umbrella to protect Cuba.⁵ Although that was merely more nuclear boasting by Khrushchev, it was an insight into his future thoughts. The deployment of Soviet ballistic missiles to Cuba was the most dangerous moment in the Cold War. Zubok and Pleshakov argue that it was a possible bold stroke to ease tensions caused by the Berlin crisis and the strategic balance between the Soviet Union and the United States.⁶ Raymond Garthoff alludes to the fact that protecting the Cuban revolution was the main priority for Khrushchev. Garthoff stressed the US-planned Bay of Pigs invasion and on-going US military exercises, while in Moscow the decision to deploy missiles was still being debated.⁷ Anatoli Gribkov, in 1962 an officer in the Soviet General Staff, believed Khrushchev's decision was an "Old Bolshevik's romantic response to Castro and to the Cuba revolution," and "an old soldier's stratagem for deploying Soviet force to defend an endangered outpost and ally."⁸ Others see Khrushchev's missile gamble as a quick and cheap

⁴ RGASPI, f. 89, opis 28, delo 10. Hoover Institution Archives

⁵ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *'One Hell of a Gamble': Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: WW. Norton and Company, 1997), 52.

⁶ Zubok and Pleshakov, 260-261.

⁷ I.D. Statsenko, "O nekotorykh voenno-politicheskikh aspektakh karibskogo krizisa," *Latinskaya Amerika* 6 (Nov-Dec 1977), 109. See also: Raymond Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1989), 6-7. Those exercises were Lantphibex 1-62 and Exercise Quick Kick, which were played out between April and May 1962. Garthoff also saw the diplomatic exclusion of Cuba, orchestrated from Washington, as well as economic warfare, as more signs to Moscow of the need to protect the island nation.

⁸ General Anatoli I. Gribkov and General William Y. Smith, *Operation Anadyr: US and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition Q, 1994), 10.

way to change the nuclear balance or strategic parity (throughout the chapter I will use these two terms interchangeably)—if not in favor of the Soviet Union, at least to lessen the widening gap between itself and the United States.⁹

Khrushchev, in his memoirs, wrote that the Soviet Union “stationed [their] armed forces on Cuban soil for one purpose only: to maintain the independence of the Cuban people and to prevent the invasion by a mercenary expeditionary force which the United States was then preparing to launch.”¹⁰ Khrushchev’s own words argued against those who suggested that the missiles were sent to Cuba to redress the strategic balance with the United States. Khrushchev’s son, Sergei, argues that the small number of missiles and warheads deployed to Cuba in 1962 were in no way an attempt to redress or improve the strategic imbalance.¹¹

Moreover, writing to Kennedy on 18 April 1961, the day after the Bay of Pigs invasion began, Khrushchev stated that “any so-called ‘small war’ can produce a chain reaction in all parts of the world. As for the Soviet Union, there should be no misunderstanding of our position: we shall render the Cuban people and their government all necessary assistance in beating back the armed attack on Cuba.”¹² Khrushchev viewed the deployment of missiles to Cuba as a two-pronged policy intended to redress the strategic balance as well as the only way conclusively to

⁹ For discussions on the strategic parity argument see: Max Frankel, *High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Presidio Press, 2004), 10. Steven J. Zaloga, *The Kremlin’s Nuclear Sword: The Rise and Fall of Russia’s Strategic Nuclear Forces, 1945-2000* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 82. David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Strategic Arms Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 85.

¹⁰ *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), 511. One must understand that Khrushchev’s memoirs must be read with the knowledge that he was writing to defend the decisions he took while head of the CPSU, and therefore would say that the defense of Cuba was a priority and to stop an invasion by the US. Writing after the crisis was decided the memoirs then would put the final outcome of Kennedy’s non-invasion pledge for withdrawal of the missiles as a Khrushchev victory and the outcome Khrushchev had hoped for from the beginning of the gambit.

¹¹ Sergei Khrushchev, interviewed by author, tape recording, Pittsburgh, PA, 23 November 2002.

¹² Michael Beschloss, *Kennedy v. Khrushchev: The Crisis Years, 1960-63* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991), 120.

protect the ‘gains’ of the Cuban revolution against what he perceived as the threat from the United States.

When was the decision made to send missiles to Cuba and what was the role of the Soviet high command in making that decision in the spring 1962? Sometime in April, Khrushchev thought about the possibility of sending missiles to Cuba. At that point he began to solicit key members of the Soviet hierarchy to include Malinovskii. In April 1962, while visiting Khrushchev as he vacationed on the Black Sea coast, Malinovskii reported on the strength of the US strategic nuclear forces, noting the disparity between the US and Soviet arsenals. Both peered out over the Black Sea as the Defense Minister mentioned the US intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), US-designated Jupiter missiles, stationed in Turkey, only a few hundred miles from where they were standing.¹³ Turning to Malinovskii, Khrushchev said, “Rodion Yakovlevich, what if we throw a hedgehog down Uncle Sam’s pants?”¹⁴ For years Khrushchev had complained to US Presidents, first to Eisenhower and then to Kennedy, that they had surrounded the Soviet Union with hostile forces—namely missiles based in Turkey, Italy, and the United Kingdom and US ballistic missile submarines capable of launching against the Soviet Union. Now he wished to return the favor and let America live with Soviet ballistic missiles on its own doorstep.

Khrushchev believed missiles in Cuba might change the strategic balance. By 1962, the Soviet Union had only a handful of ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) operational yet had a greater number of medium and intermediate range missiles operational. Stationing those

¹³ Steven Zaloga, *Target America: The Soviet Union and the Strategic Arms Race: 1945-1964* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), 199.

¹⁴ William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (London: The Free Press, 2003), 541.

medium and intermediate range missiles in Cuba, within striking distance of the United States, nearly doubled Soviet missiles capable of reaching the US. While still visiting Khrushchev on the Black Sea, Malinovskii told Khrushchev that he and Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Zakharov, had discussed the possibility of deploying strategic weapons to Cuba. However, both believed that such a deployment was more a political than military question/decision.¹⁵ That was the key understanding of these two officers, unlike Moskalenko. They were tasked with using their military knowledge and expertise to implement a decision the political authorities had already decided upon. They were not being asked on opinions or whether it should be done but to make sure they accomplished the task set to them. That was a guiding principle of all civil-military relations, advise and consult but do not question decisions already made. Just as in the United States or the United Kingdom in the buildup to the second Iraq war, decisions were made and each military establishment was tasked with carrying it out and presenting their operational plans. So it was in the USSR in the summer 1962. Were Malinovskii and Zakharov showing deference towards Khrushchev and acknowledging his role in their advancement and promotions through the ranks? No, Malinovskii and Zakharov knew how the Soviet system operated when making such bold, significant decisions. Political, and thus Party considerations were of utmost importance. All final decisions were in the hands of the political apparatus of the Soviet state—the Presidium of the CC, and thus Khrushchev. Again, that deference was no different in western governments. Political authorities made political decisions on when to use or deploy military power, and the military was tasked with following those orders.

¹⁵ Dmitri Volkogonov, *Autopsy for an Empire: The Seven Leaders Who Built the Soviet Regime* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 236-237.

Khrushchev, consistent with military-budgetary decisions made since the mid-1950s, also believed stationing missiles in Cuba narrowed the strategic missile gap on the cheap.¹⁶ Missiles in Cuba carried the same strategic value as ICBMs stationed within the Soviet Union but at a far lower cost than the far more expensive ICBMs. The cost of deploying missiles to Cuba equated to about half of what it would to deploy missiles with similar payloads and targeting ability in the Soviet Union.¹⁷

Prior to meeting with Malinovskii, Khrushchev had chaired an extended session of the Defense Council, in February 1962, while on vacation at Pitsunda.¹⁸ As a mixture of Party and military officials the Defense Council was the supreme body in military decision-making in the Soviet Union. At Pitsunda, the Defense Council discussed the inadequacy of the Soviet ICBMs that were currently deployed. Problems included long preparation times before those missiles could be readied to fire due to the nature of the highly toxic and corrosive liquid fuels and oxidizers being used in Soviet ballistic missiles. While it might take over an hour for a Soviet missile to be readied for firing from the time the order was given, US missiles sat ready to fire at a moments notice due to more advanced technology including the US's usage of solid rocket

¹⁶ In October 1961, Deputy Defense Secretary of the United States, Roswell Gilpatric, gave a speech, which for the first time, publicly stated that a missile gap in favor of the Soviet Union did not exist. Speaking to the National Business Council, Gilpatric stated that US "confidence in [its] ability to deter Communist action, or resist Communist blackmail, is based on a sober appreciation of the relative military power of the two sides." Gilpatric went on to say that the US "has nuclear retaliatory force of such lethal power that an enemy moved which brought it into play would be an act of self-destruction on his part. The US has today [October 1961] hundreds of manned intercontinental bombers capable of reaching the Soviet Union..." See: Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profiles in Power* (New York: Touchstone, 1993), 246-47.

¹⁷ Zaloga, *Target America*, 199. At the beginning of 1962, the Soviets had deployed only 4 operational ICBMs.

¹⁸ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 468. The Defense Council included Khrushchev, Frol Kozlov, Leonid Brezhnev, Aleksei Kosygin, Anastas Mikoyan, Marshal Malinovskii, Marshal Grechko, Army General Epishev (GPU), and Colonel General S.P. Ivanov (General Staff, Secretary Defense Council). The Defense Council was a forum in which the Kremlin's top political leaders met with senior military advisors; it convened irregularly, and as events warranted.

fuels. Khrushchev's question to his 'advisors' was how to overcome those shortcomings of the Soviet strategic arsenal. Colonel General Semyon P. Ivanov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff's Main Operations Directorate, served as secretary for the Defense Council. As the spring 1962 progressed, Ivanov served as the main link between the Defense Council and his Directorate, which was responsible for planning, in detail, the Cuban deployment. Throughout April-May 1962, the Defense Council continued to meet to hash out the question of sending missiles to Cuba.

On 14 May 1962, Khrushchev flew to Bulgaria on an official visit. According to Sergei Khrushchev, it was in Bulgaria that his father ultimately decided to send missiles to Cuba. Taking a break from an official meeting, Khrushchev peered out over the Black Sea from Varna on the Bulgarian coast toward the US missiles in Turkey.¹⁹ He argued that the missiles directly threatened the Soviet Union and were a thorn in his side. Why not station Soviet missiles close to the US as they had done to the Soviet Union?

That was the question Khrushchev asked his Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, while flying back to Moscow from Bulgaria. Sergei Khrushchev stated that Gromyko supported such a decision, believing that the US would not risk war over Soviet missiles in Cuba.²⁰ However, Gromyko expressed some reservations about the idea of a missile gamble in Cuba. He told Khrushchev that he believed, "frankly that putting our missiles in Cuba would cause a political explosion in the United States. I am absolutely certain of that, and [that] should be taken into

¹⁹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 483.

²⁰ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 485. At the same time, the US believed that Khrushchev and the Soviets would "almost certainly...not resort to general war for the sake of the Castro regime." The CIA believed that Khrushchev did not want to invest time or money into Cuba. See Fursenko and Naftali, 158.

account.”²¹ Gromyko seemed ambiguous. Nevertheless, when Khrushchev asked Gromyko’s opinion on the flight to Moscow, it was not so much to receive counsel before making a decision but informing the Foreign Minister that Khrushchev was about to announce to the Presidium a decision that he had already committed himself to. Any reluctance by Gromyko had no bearing on Khrushchev whatsoever. Perhaps that was Khrushchev’s way of telling Gromyko that it was going to be a difficult year for the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

The Plan

After returning from Bulgaria, Khrushchev widened the circle of Party and military officials he ‘consulted’ about sending missiles to Cuba. On 21 May 1962, the Defense Council was again convened in the Kremlin. According to General Anatoli Gribkov, who in 1962 worked in the Soviet General Staff in the Operations Directorate under Colonel General Ivanov, that meeting was the first time Malinovskii, Zakharov, and the rest of the military high command were informed of Khrushchev’s planned missile deployment to Cuba.²² That is implausible since Malinovskii, at least, had to have some prior knowledge or inkling after his discussions with Khrushchev at the Black Sea the month before. Nonetheless, at that Defense Council meeting, Khrushchev told his comrades of his intentions. Soviet missiles in Cuba created protection for the island nation as well as strengthening the Soviet Union’s capabilities against the US mainland. Ivanov remembered that the meeting did not go as smoothly as Khrushchev had hoped. A long drawn out debate ensued. Anastas Mikoyan, a longtime friend and confidant of

²¹ Beschloss, 387.

²² Gribkov and Smith, 7.

Khrushchev, opposed the stationing of missiles in Cuba. Mikoyan believed the gains of non-deployment outweighed the risks of deployment. He also had prior knowledge of Cuba—its terrain, culture, and history. Perhaps he knew that it was a simply unfeasible operation. However, in the end, the Defense Council instructed the Ministries of Defense, the Navy, and Foreign Affairs to “organize the concealed movement of troops and military technology by ship to Cuba.”²³

Protocols required that the relevant governmental institutions manage the implementation of the Defense Council’s decision. Before a final decision on the deployment was made, a plan had to be drafted and presented before the Presidium of the CC. Colonel General Ivanov, as head of the Soviet General Staff’s planning directorate, was charged with planning the operation.²⁴ Once Ivanov returned to the General Staff, he seemed unnecessarily agitated according to Gribkov. From Ivanov’s notes of the Defense Council meeting, Gribkov was charged with formulating the operational plan for the deployment of medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Gribkov worked with his two deputies, Major General Gennady Ivanovich Yeliseyev and Colonel Vyacheslav Nikolayevich Kotov. Together the troika had to turn Ivanov’s notes into a formal General Staff proposal to Nikita Khrushchev.²⁵

Malinovskii and Zakharov presented the General Staff’s plan, which Gribkov and his deputies organized, to Khrushchev and the Defense Council on 24 May.²⁶ In a memorandum

²³ Fursenko and Naftali *“One Hell of a Gamble,”* 180.

²⁴ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 488.

²⁵ Gribkov and Smith, 9.

²⁶ Sources differ about the exact composition of the 24 May meeting. Some sources state that it was solely a meeting of the Defense Council (Gribkov and Smith), while others state that it was a joint meeting of the Defense Council and Presidium (see Volkogonov and Taubman).

from Malinovskii and Zakharov to Khrushchev, the General Staff's plan was laid out. The Ministry of Defense proposed:

- To deploy on the island of Cuba a Group of Forces comprising all branches of the Armed Forces, under a single integrated staff of the Group of Forces headed by a Commander in Chief of Soviet forces in Cuba.
- To send to Cuba the 43rd Missile Division (commander of the division Major General Statsenko) comprising five missile regiments:
 - The 79th, 181st, and 664th R-12 [SS-4] missile regiments with eight launchers each, in all 24 launchers.
 - The 665th and 668th R-14 [SS-5] missile regiments with eight launchers each, in all 16 launchers.
- In all, 40 R-12 and R-14 launchers.
- With the missile units to send 1.5 missiles and 1.5 warheads per each launcher (in all 60 missiles and 60 warheads), with one field missile technical base (PRTB) per regiment for equipping the warheads and rocket fuel in mobile tanks with 1.75 loadings per R-12 missile and 1.5 per R-14 missile at each launcher.²⁷

The memorandum went on to state that construction of the launch platforms would take four months. Along with the missile division, all necessary construction and support equipment was to be shipped from the Soviet Union to Cuba. Shipments of military and support equipment were to begin in July in two phases—the first to be the R-12 regiments and the second to encompass the R-14 regiments.²⁸

Deploying ballistic missiles to Cuba entailed the risk of shipping Soviet military technology oceans away, past NATO allied countries, such as Turkey and the United Kingdom, by way of the Turkish Straits and the North Sea respectively. To protect military 'investments' in Cuba, the Ministry of Defense planned to send air defense forces and coastal defense forces to Cuba as well. The anti-aircraft forces included two anti-aircraft divisions, to include six anti-

²⁷ R. Malinovskii and M. Zakharov, Memorandum on Deployment of Soviet Forces to Cuba, 24 May 1962, Cold War International History Project Virtual Archive, CWIHP, Woodrow Wilson Center.

²⁸ Malinovskii and Zakharov Memorandum. See Memorandum for a greater enumeration of all construction and support facilities sent to Cuba from the Soviet Union as part of Operation Anadyr.

aircraft battalions, one fighter regiment equipped with MiG-21s, and two radar battalions. The coastal defenses sent to Cuba consisted of ‘*Sopka*’ missile launchers (three battalions) and missile patrol boats.²⁹ Along with these forces, the General Staff recommended sending FKR (frontal cruise missiles) to Cuba. These cruise missiles had an effective range of 180 kilometres, and were capable of being used against a threatening amphibious invasion force.³⁰ FKR were also capable of being fitted with nuclear payloads. The Soviet General Staff’s plan envisioned sending four motorized infantry regiments and two tank battalions to Cuba as well. Each motorized regiment was composed of 2,500 soldiers, and the tank battalions were outfitted with the latest T-55 tanks.³¹

In total, the General Staff’s plan called for 50,874 Soviet military personnel deployed to Cuba.³² Malinovskii and the Soviet military saw the Cuban mission as a projection of Soviet military power. The operational and logistical feats that were necessary to carry out the General Staff’s ambitious plan had seldom been seen in the Soviet Union, certainly not since World War II. Logistically, the Cuban deployment was one of the Soviet military’s greatest accomplishments. In sheer tonnage and arms, to include troops and support personnel, moved across vast oceans, the Soviet Union had never attempted such an expedition.³³ Such an operation had to move with the utmost secrecy. Despite having a high-ranking officer within the

²⁹ Malinovskii and Zakharov Memorandum. Sopka rockets were capable of destroying surface ships at a range of 80km. The coastal patrol boats were of the Soviet Komar class missile patrol boat.

³⁰ Malinovskii and Zakharov Memorandum.

³¹ Fursenko and Naftali ‘*One Hell of a Gamble*,’ 188.

³² Fursenko and Naftali ‘*One Hell of a Gamble*,’ 188. See also: Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 501.

³³ Eight different Soviet ports were used to ship military equipment to Cuba. They were in the south: Sevastopol, Feodosia, Nikolayev, and Poti; and in the north: Kronstadt, Liepaya, Baltiysk, and Murmansk. As equipment was moved to these ports security was exponentially increased, and officers from the General Staff were sent to each to check on the progress of loading ships and to guarantee strict secrecy. See: Gribkov and Smith, 29.

GRU, Oleg Penkovskii, the US intelligence community was unaware until the U-2 photographs showed Soviet missiles already in Cuba. At the height of the crisis, Penkovskii was arrested by the KGB on 22 October. Before his arrest however, previous intelligence given to the US had allowed Kennedy's national security team properly to identify the missiles. Earlier in the year, Penkovskii had turned over manuals on the Soviet R-12 MRBMs to US and British intelligence; those manuals allowed analysts correctly to establish what the U-2 photographs meant.³⁴ From other debriefings of Penkovskii the West learned that not all Soviet elites were happy with Khrushchev's leadership. Penkovskii reiterated to his Western handlers that some elites were saying, 'if Stalin were alive, he would everything quietly, but this fool [Khrushchev] is blurting out threats and intentions and is forcing our possible enemies to increase their military strengths.'³⁵ Cuba was a surreptitious operations; it would have been completed and presented as a *fiat accompli* had it not been for the US U-2 and the intelligence on Soviet missile systems passed on by Penkovskii.

Such was the plan presented by Malinovskii and Zakharov to Khrushchev and the political leaders of the Soviet Union. Comments were made by Khrushchev; however, all present at the 24 May Defense Council meeting approved the operational plan put forth by the military. The meeting decided to send a fact finding mission to Cuba, which had two main objectives—to discuss the deployment of ballistic missiles with Fidel Castro and to allow the military to assess the feasibility of deploying missiles and other military hardware to Cuba surreptitiously.

³⁴ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, 465.

³⁵ Penkovsky's Debriefings, second phase: July-August in London, July 18-19 1961, p. 14, the collection of the National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

Feasibility

Sharaf Rashidov, candidate member of the Presidium and First Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, headed the mission to Cuba in May. From the military, Biryuzov was sent and tasked to decide if missiles could be deployed to Cuba secretly and camouflaged once deployed and operational. Colonel General Ivanov, of the General Staff, was supposed to accompany Biryuzov to Cuba; however, it was decided that he was too busy to leave Moscow. In his place, Major General Petr V. Ageyev (General Staff Operations Directorate) and Lt. General Sergei F. Ushakov (Deputy Head, Air Force Central Staff) went to Cuba. Rashidov and Biryuzov's mission lasted two days—28 and 29 May 1962.³⁶ While Rashidov discussed the details of the operation with Castro and looked for the Cuban leader's approval to station Soviet missiles on his island, Biryuzov traveled around the tiny island nation deciding on areas to station the missiles and to consider how to camouflage them, thus disguising them from meddlesome US intelligence over flights. The commander of the Soviet Military mission to Cuba, Major General A.A. Dementiev, accompanied Raul Castro to Moscow in July 1962. Dementiev had reservations concerning whether the missiles could be concealed. Dementiev expressed great concern of overflights by US U-2 planes over Cuba; those flights, despite concealment, would make any deployment difficult.³⁷ Biryuzov found that the missiles were

³⁶ Fursenko and Naftali, *'One Hell of a Gamble,'* 181.

³⁷ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 444.

easily camouflaged, as coconut palm trees nonetheless!³⁸ However, saving face for the military by placing blame on the Party, Gribkov stated that Rashidov, not Biryuzov, was the individual who mistakenly thought that missiles could be disguised as palm trees. Gribkov saw Rashidov as a Party hack without the military knowledge or background to advise on such a sensitive issue. Thus, the Soviet deployment of ballistic missiles was able to be carried out secretly. Were Biryuzov's findings entirely accurate? How could a camouflage scheme based on tall, somewhat lean, palm trees conceal fuel trucks, command and support buildings, holding tanks, cables and hoses, and the concrete slabs shipped from the Soviet Union for the base of the missiles' launching platform? Two days of rushed meetings and reconnaissance produced a flawed study, which was presented to Khrushchev and the Presidium by Rashidov upon his return.³⁹

Khrushchev wanted to present Kennedy with a *fait accompli* in November, after the Congressional elections in the United States. According to Steven Zaloga, Khrushchev was convinced by his military advisors that missiles could be easily installed in Cuba surreptitiously without any US knowledge of Soviet actions.⁴⁰ Upon his return from Cuba, Biryuzov briefed the military and Party officials on his findings. Khrushchev believed that the missiles could be easily disguised as coconut palms as Biryuzov stated. Sergei Khrushchev believes that his father was misled by the military on the viability of the Cuban deployment, on the chance of it succeeding secretly.⁴¹ It was left to the military to decide the feasibility of the operation. The "military saw this as a task to be accomplished (for an objective they desired) rather than an open

³⁸ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 502. See Sergei Khrushchev's opinion below on Rashidov's contributions to his and Biryuzov's mission to Cuba in May 1962.

³⁹ Informatsiya T. Rashidov o poezdke na Kubu, Protocol 35, *Arkhivi Kremlya*, 568.

⁴⁰ Zaloga, 83.

⁴¹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 502.

technical question.”⁴² In other words, the military believed that Biryuzov’s mission to Cuba was a mere formality. Sergei Khrushchev does place some blame for poor intelligence about the feasibility of the missiles deployment directly on Rashidov. According to Sergei, Rashidov did not allow enough time for Biryuzov thoroughly to carry out the military aspects of their trip to Cuba. Insufficient time was spent in gathering intelligence on the proposed missile launch pad sites.⁴³ Returning from Cuba with a negative report on the feasibility of the mission was not an option open to Biryuzov. If it was not feasible, then the military had to make it feasible. Party officials did not come right out and tell the military that there were no options open to them; however, the Party did want the military to carry out the mission assigned to it regardless of any military concerns including the level of success. Their task was to find a way surreptitiously to deploy missiles to Cuba. Therefore, the Cuban deployment was a mission carried out by the military, in which the high command had no choice but to carry out the wishes of the Party regardless of their own opinions on the operation.

Again, the question of feasibility illustrated the degree to which military expertise was supplanted by personal loyalty to Khrushchev. The ‘Stalingrad Group,’ surrounding Khrushchev tacitly knew that the mission had to be carried out expediently and that it had to be accomplished. Biryuzov and Rashidov (a Khrushchev political appointee to the Presidium of the Central Committee) returned from Cuba with the news that they knew Khrushchev wanted to hear and that guaranteed their standing in the Soviet system.

The cases of Marshal Moskalenko and Marshal Fillip Golikov clearly illustrate the limits to which Khrushchev was willing to tolerate any military opinions that differed with the Party

⁴² Garthoff, 16.

⁴³ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 493.

position on sending missiles to Cuba. In April 1962, Moskalenko was commander of the Soviet Union's Strategic Rocket Forces, a post he had held since 1960 and a post that was integral to the Cuban plan. Golikov headed the Main Political Directorate, the Party's control organ over the military. During the military purges of the 1930s, it was Golikov who questioned Zhukov on his relationship with Uborevich and Tukhachevskii. When Zhukov was dismissed in 1957, Golikov replaced Zheltov as head of the GPU. In April, both Moskalenko and Golikov criticized Khrushchev's plan for missiles in Cuba.⁴⁴ It is still unclear why they were critical, but one can assume both officers understood the difficulties in sending nuclear weapons and their launching systems to Cuba surreptitiously and what the US reaction might be. Nonetheless, Moskalenko was the commanding officer of the Soviet's nuclear arm, and he understood the arduous task that the Soviet state was about to undertake. Khrushchev did not take kindly to unsolicited criticism of his plan. Moskalenko was replaced by Marshal Biryuzov (from 1955 until his new appointment head of the Soviet air defence forces, see Appendix A), who was considered a "can-do" man and who believed the covert missile deployment was feasible.⁴⁵ Army General Epishev replaced Golikov. Both Epishev and Biryuzov were members of the 'Stalingrad Group' and easily complied with the wishes of their benefactor, Nikita Khrushchev.⁴⁶ Thus, Khrushchev strongly discouraged dissent among military commanders to his ambitious plan for Cuba by removing those who counseled caution. The cases of Moskalenko and Golikov illustrated the fractures within the Stalingrad Group. Those two officers' fates also show the practice of selecting officers that comply with Khrushchev policies out of a sense of duty to retain their

⁴⁴ Zaloga, *Target America*, 203.

⁴⁵ Taubman, 546.

⁴⁶ Biryuzov had served as Chief of Staff of the 2nd Guards Army at Stalingrad; his immediate superior was the commander of the 2nd Guards Army, Rodion Malinovskii.

posts. Moskalenko and Golikov each were removed and replaced with other members of the Stalingrad Group but officers that did not voice concerns. Not willing to bend to Khrushchev's wishes, both were willing to sacrifice their careers rather than their sense of military professionalism and expertise. Alas, it was also insubordinate to question policies already decided by the Presidium. Past experiences illustrate that without the questions raised, Moskalenko and Golikov would have retained their posts. Both were members of the Stalingrad Group and had supported Khrushchev through 1962. Moskalenko was who Khrushchev turned to in helping to remove Beria.

Another aspect of the division between military officers was brought to the forefront over the decision to send submarines as part of a navy flotilla to Cuba. Four Foxtrot submarines, each carrying a nuclear-tipped torpedo, sailed for Cuba. On 23 October, Khrushchev was advocating that the submarines run the US naval blockade of Cuba. Anastas Mikoyan opposed such a notion outright; he argued that it would be a clear sign of escalation on the part of the Soviets. That was in addition to Mikoyan's initial concerns of stationing missiles in Cuba as a costly gambit if revealed to the US prior to completion. Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, commander-in-chief of the Soviet Navy, sided with Mikoyan in that argument. Malinovskii supported Khrushchev and argued for the submarines to continue their mission towards Cuba and sail closer to the blockade.⁴⁷ It was on Mikoyan's suggestion that Gorshkov addressed the members of the Presidium and officers gathered. Mikoyan knew that Gorshkov and Malinovskii were cordial with one another in the best of circumstances. Once the Presidium heard from Gorshkov, they nonetheless supported keeping the submarines safely out at sea. With Gorshkov providing the

⁴⁷ Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, 55-56.

superior naval and technical knowledge, Malinovskii was shown to be incompetent; thus, Malinovskii did not object to the decision made.⁴⁸ This example provides another illustration of the division within the Soviet high command. Gorshkov was an officer first, and he saw it as his job to counsel with the best possible knowledge and intelligence available. Though his caution was not heeded by the Presidium, he did his duty as an officer by providing military advice. Unlike Biryuzov, Admiral Gorshkov was willing to be a bearer of bad news, upholding a standard of military service, thus, illustrating military professionalism. By 1962, officers from the Stalingrad Group commanded key positions within the General Staff and Ministry of Defence. While some of those officers supported Khrushchev's ideas and policies over their own professional values, a number of officers saw it their duty to speak out against harebrained schemes, such as deploying missiles to Cuba.

Anadyr

Bureaucratically, the Presidium of the CC had to vote on the approved plan to deploy missiles to Cuba. On 10 June 1962, the Presidium convened to rubber-stamp Khrushchev's missile gambit. Military officers, who were not members of the Presidium, acted as advisors at that meeting and presented the General Staff's plans to the Presidium.⁴⁹ The meeting was presented with the findings of Biryuzov and Rashidov's mission to Cuba. Now the wheels and cogs began turning. Operation *Anadyr*, as the missile deployment was codenamed, began. On 8

⁴⁸ Mikoyan's unpublished memoir, cited in Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, 480.

⁴⁹ Fursenko and Naftali, *'One Hell of a Gamble'*, 187. Military officers present on 10 June were Marshals Malinovskii, Zakharov, Biryuzov, Chuikov (commander, Soviet Ground Forces), and Army General Epishev.

September 1962, the Soviet freighter *Omsk* arrived in Cuba with the first shipment of missile equipment. The first nuclear warheads for the R-12s arrived onboard the *Indigirka* on 4 October.⁵⁰

Before Operation *Anadyr* commenced, one final decision had to be agreed upon between the military high command and senior Party officials. Who was to command the Cuban expedition? Army General Issa Pliyev was given the command of the Soviet Group of Forces Cuba. Why? He had no prior experience commanding Soviet nuclear forces nor did he ever previously command forces of the RVSN. Prior to his command in Cuba, Pliyev had only been known for commanding the Soviet troops of the North Caucasian Military District that were sent to Novocherkassk earlier that year. Pliyev had been chosen to be given the command in Cuba over Lt. General Pavel B. Dankevich, who was a commander of the rocket forces stationed in Ukraine and Belorussia. Secrecy was of utmost importance to Khrushchev; thus, he did not want someone associated with rocket forces to hold the overall command position in Cuba.⁵¹

Malinovskii and his deputies in the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff wanted the overall most competent and capable commander for the mission. That would mean someone familiar with those forces being deployed, even if a RVSN commander might allude to the actual forces being deployed to Cuba risking the element of surprise. With hindsight, Pliyev was neither capable nor competent to manage a Soviet Group of Forces; he lacked the necessary skills for handling the strong personality of Castro and was inadequate in his overall command of those subordinate to him. According to William Taubman, Lt. General Dankevich was the choice of

⁵⁰ Gribkov and Smith, 45. The *Indigirka* sailed from Severomorsk, near Murmansk.

⁵¹ Fursenko and Naftali 'One Hell of a Gamble,' 192.

the Soviet General Staff, but Zakharov and his staff had their man rejected by the Party.⁵² To carry out a mission for which First Secretary had great expectations, Khrushchev turned to his World War II comrade, Pliyev. Whatever orders Pliyev was given, Steven Zaloga believed that I.D. Statsenko, commander of the missile division in Cuba, was the *de facto* commander of the Soviet Group of Forces Cuba. Pliyev only had *de jure* command of Soviet conventional forces.

Once again, Khrushchev chose mediocrity over merit. He chose a commander he was familiar with and had personal dealings with during WW II over a commander with experience in the field with ballistic weapons. Selecting Pliyev further illustrated the idea of selecting agents that were compliant over those deserving through meritorious service. Patterns are now starting to develop where Khrushchev has chosen officers less deserving of promotion over those with service and merit. He has chosen officers to command posts whom he can trust and he feels can be controlled to a greater extent. Perhaps his experience with Zhukov made him adverse to choosing based on merit.

Dissecting Khrushchev's Kremlin office appointment log for 1962 showed no discernible patterns of meetings. It shows that throughout the year he met with key members of the military and foreign ministry establishments. Gromyko and Malinovskii were frequent visitors to his office. However, after the top was blown off the crisis, Malinovskii and military officers became less frequent visitors. Dmitri Ustinov, who was influential in the military-industrial complex of the Soviet Union, was a regular visitor to Khrushchev's office in April. While most of Ustinov's meetings lasted no more than ten minutes, he would have kept Khrushchev apprised of industrial planning necessities for the deployment. While the log of Khrushchev's appointments does not

⁵² Taubman, 548. Taubman does allude to the fact that Malinovskii might have sided with Khrushchev on giving command to Pliyev, which might have put him at odds with his own General Staff. Taubman states that Khrushchev and Malinovskii turned to a trusted comrade from their days at Stalingrad.

provide information about what was discussed at those meeting, it is an indicator of who Khrushchev was seeing throughout the year and how frequently from October onward, Party officials increased their visits.⁵³

As shipments of weapons continued throughout the summer and into the autumn, further safeguards were taken to protect Soviet missiles then being installed in Cuba. Not only were strategic nuclear weapons sent to Cuba, but the Soviets deemed it necessary to send tactical or battlefield nuclear weapons to deter and repel any invasion force sent against the island. The General Staff's deployment plan called for the FKR cruise missiles to be coupled with either conventional or nuclear warheads.⁵⁴

In August 1962, Khrushchev had left Moscow for his summer holiday in Pitsunda. It was there, in September, that Khrushchev decided to increase the protective security measures in Cuba. While on vacation, he asked Malinovskii whether tactical nuclear weapons could be flown to Cuba. Malinovskii responded positively stating that short-range 'Luna' missiles were able to be flown to Cuba. However, the Defense Ministry cautioned against rushing tactical/ battlefield nuclear weapons to Cuba.⁵⁵ Their caution was on the transportation of those weapons over long distances to Cuba from the USSR. The Defense Ministry, despite its reservations, recommended sending one squadron of Il-28 light bombers, with six 8-12 kiloton nuclear bombs, and two to three divisions of 'Luna' missiles. It was also recommended that the warheads for

⁵³ "Uchet lits, priniatykh predsedatelem soveta ministrov tov. Khrushcheym N.S.," *Istochnik*, No. 4 (2003): 84-92.

⁵⁴ R. Malinovskii and M. Zakharov, Memorandum on Deployment of Soviet Forces to Cuba.

⁵⁵ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, "The Pitsunda Decision: Khrushchev and Nuclear Weapons," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (March 1998).

those missiles should be shipped to Cuba.⁵⁶ Khrushchev approved the recommendations of the Ministry. Tactical nuclear weapons were to be sent to Cuba.

Who was to have operational control over battlefield nuclear weapons, weapons that were thousands of miles from Moscow's direct control? In what circumstances was Issa Pliyev to use those weapons sent to repel a possible invasion of Cuba by the United States. Pliyev was to be given control to use those nuclear weapons in the event that communications between his headquarters and Moscow were severed and an US-led invasion had begun. Contingency plans were created in case of such a change of events. An order to that effect was drafted by the General Staff, which required the signatures of both Malinovskii, as Minister of Defense, and Zakharov, as Chief of the Soviet General Staff. Zakharov signed the order, while Malinovskii did not as a precaution. Only when the order needed to be implemented would Malinovskii sign it. If invasion was imminent based on solid intelligence, Pliyev was to be given control of the tactical nuclear weapons under his command.⁵⁷ After the escalation of the crisis, once the US discovered the Soviet strategic missiles, Pliyev requested the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the event of an invasion. Both Malinovskii and Khrushchev disagreed with Pliyev and did not relinquish Moscow's safeguarding control of those weapons. Throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, General Pliyev was categorically forbidden to order the use of nuclear weapons—whether tactical or strategic.

To illustrate the tense command authority situation in Moscow and within the Soviet forces in Cuba one has only to examine the situation surrounding the downing of Colonel Rudolf

⁵⁶ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, "The Pitsunda Decision: Khrushchev and Nuclear Weapons," Cold War International History Project Bulletin 10 (March 1998).

⁵⁷ Ibid. See also: Fursenko and Naftali, "*One Hell of a Gamble*", 212; Mark Kramer, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons, Soviet Command Authority, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," Cold War International History Project Bulletin 3 (Fall 1993).

Anderson's U-2 over Cuba on 27 October 1962.⁵⁸ Commanders of the Soviet air defense forces were nowhere to be found while Anderson was making his photographic reconnaissance flight over Cuba. Who gave the order to fire SA-2 surface-to-air missiles (SAM) at Anderson's U-2? A decision taken by two local Soviet commanders in Cuba resulted in the downing of the U-2. That decision was taken without orders from Moscow. Major General Igor Statsenko, commander of the SAM sites in the eastern part of Cuba made the decision to fire on Anderson's U-2 after clearing it with Lt. General Stepan Grechko, deputy to Pliyev. Neither General Davidkov, commander of Soviet Air Defense forces in Cuba, nor Pliyev were cognizant of the decision prior to the SA-2 being fired at Anderson. It was on the decision of Pliyev's deputies, Grechko and Major General Leonid Garbuz, that Statsenko gave his command.⁵⁹ The commander at the SAM site and his immediate superior, Statsenko, gave the orders to fire on an American spy plane. A local commander escalating the crisis was a consistent worry for both the Soviet and American leaders. What if the local Soviet commanders gave orders to fire tactical nuclear weapons or the strategic rockets on the island? Safeguards taken by the Soviet Union prevented an incident such as Anderson's U-2 occurring with nuclear weapons. Command for the use of any nuclear weapons on the island was to be given only from Moscow. Delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads were separately stored. As stated above command authority of those weapons rested solely in the hands of those in Moscow—specifically Khrushchev. Sophisticated technology safeguards were not developed yet; however, unless orders came

⁵⁸ That same day a US U-2 entered Soviet airspace over the Chukhotsk peninsula. The plane set off Soviet air defense systems but returned to Alaska under US fighter escort without incident.

⁵⁹ Michael Dobbs, 237.

directly from Khrushchev, through the Ministry of Defense, nuclear weapons on Cuba were not to be used or even armed and coupled with their attendant delivery systems.

Thus, the die was cast for the standoff that began when President John F. Kennedy addressed the American public on 22 October 1962. The crisis began that day for the Soviet Party and military leadership. The night of 22-23 October was a tense night for those in the Kremlin waiting to hear the US President's words and what actions might be taken now that he knew the Soviet Union had installed nuclear missiles surreptitiously in Cuba.⁶⁰ While walking with his son, Sergei, at their Lenin Hills home, Khrushchev received word of Kennedy's upcoming speech and immediately called for a meeting of the Presidium, also inviting Malinovskii and Vasily Kuznetsov, deputy Foreign Minister, to the meeting.⁶¹

Response and Reaction

The Kremlin's first thought on Kennedy's speech was one of relief, because it did not mean immediate war. Malinovskii's assessment of the situation was, as of 22 October, the US was not yet capable of launching an invasion force against Cuba. Malinovskii continued, cautioning against an accidental nuclear exchange. Orders were to be sent to Pliyev putting all forces on alert, to include the tactical nuclear weapons. However, after reading the entire text of Kennedy's speech, the orders were not sent.⁶² Days later, on 27 October, Malinovskii sent

⁶⁰ Colonel Oleg Penkovskii, a Soviet officer turned CIA and MI-6 spy, was arrested in Moscow on the night of 22 October 1962, at the very height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Penkovskii was assigned to the Chief Intelligence Administration of the Soviet General Staff, what Sergei Khrushchev has labeled the 'very heart of the Ministry of Defense.' Penkovskii provided useful intelligence to both the Americans and the British on Soviet strategic capabilities and actual numbers of Soviet missiles.

⁶¹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 555.

⁶² Fursenko and Naftali, *'One Hell of a Gamble,'* 247-48.

another order to Pliyev in Cuba: “It is categorically confirmed that it is forbidden to use nuclear weapons from the missiles, FKRS, and Lunas.”⁶³ Command and control of all nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear battlefield weapons, was solely in the hands of the Kremlin.

Malinovskii’s latest order was sent once the Kennedy-Khrushchev deal, including the Jupiter missiles in Turkey, was firmly established.

At the Presidium meeting, permission was granted to the Ministry of Defense to raise the level of alert and readiness of Soviet armed forces and those of the Warsaw Pact. Malinovskii ordered Marshal Grechko, commander of the Warsaw Pact, to “call together the officers of the countries of the Warsaw Pact and order the implementation...of measures to raise the military readiness of the military, navy, and air force of the United Military Force.”⁶⁴ Leaves and furloughs were cancelled. A transfer of troops from active duty to the reserves was canceled. However, no redeployment of forces within the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe occurred. While, readiness was increased, Soviet forces did not attain a wartime footing throughout the entire crisis.⁶⁵

What would the Soviet reaction have been if the US had moved against Cuba? On 22 October, only the Foreign Ministry made any suggestion that a parallel move should be made against Berlin. Vasily Kuznetsov, Gromyko’s deputy at the Foreign Ministry, suggested that Soviet pressure be leveled against West Berlin. In front of the full Presidium, Khrushchev harangued Kuznetsov for such a dangerous statement. Khrushchev chastised Kuznetsov for implying the Soviet Union begin another crisis when they had no way out of the Cuban debacle

⁶³ Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, 201.

⁶⁴ Fursenko and Naftali, *‘One Hell of a Gamble,’* 248.

⁶⁵ Garthoff, 65.

yet.⁶⁶ The question has yet to be answered whether the Soviet military command suggested such a move against Berlin or whether and contingency plans were developed for a military move against Berlin or Western Europe should the Cuban Missile Crisis expand into a shooting war between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The General Department archives contain daily reports of the military situation concerning East German and Soviet forces in Berlin dating from November 1961.⁶⁷ Reports contained both the line of battle for both the Soviet allied forces as well as those of the United States and NATO. All reports were cosigned by both Malinovskii and Chief of the General Staff Zakharov; however, at times reports were only signed by S. Ivanov from the General Staff. The first report on 2 November reported on the overall strength of US strategic air power within the European and Far Eastern zones of operations. Although dated only from November to December 1961, those reports show that Berlin was a concern; nonetheless, it had always been a Cold War hot point since the end of World War II. Over the course of that period, the Americans had increased their air power by 20 strategic aircraft.⁶⁸ Those reports followed the erection of the Berlin Wall two months earlier and the standoff between US and Soviet forces at Checkpoint Charlie the previous month. Reports to the Central Committee illustrate the concern from the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff. As 1961 came to a close, concern shifted to internal problems and across the Atlantic to Cuba.

⁶⁶ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 560. See also, Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, 440-444, 452, 611n.

⁶⁷ RGANI, f. 5, opis 30, delo 368. General Department Archives held on microfilm, European Research Centre, University of Birmingham.

⁶⁸ RGANI, f. 5, opis 30, delo 368. General Department Archives held on microfilm, European Research Centre, University of Birmingham.

If the Soviets did not link machinations in Cuba with a move against West Berlin, Malinovskii, along with Zakharov and Ivanov, kept the political leadership apprised of the military situation in Germany in October and into November 1962. These were similar reports to those that followed the erection of the Berlin Wall.⁶⁹ Malinovskii and Zakharov maintained close surveillance of NATO strategic airpower within West Germany.

However, the meeting on 22 October and Khrushchev's reaction to Kuznetsov's comments showed the leadership's position on Berlin. The military may have had a plan for a move against Berlin—merely a military operational plan, which was to show how a Soviet military force, could move against Berlin. A plan such as that doubtlessly existed during the entire Cold War. Nonetheless, a special plan seems never to have been outlined for a move against Berlin in response to a US move against Cuba during the Crisis. Khrushchev's barking harangue at Kuznetsov illustrated that at no time did Khrushchev, and thus the Party, feel it necessary to order the military to plan for such a situation. This is an important aspect of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and it is important to telling the military's story of its role in the Crisis. Khrushchev did not tie Cuba to Berlin. It was not a diversion but its own separate move in the chess game of the Cold War. A feint tied to Berlin was not Khrushchev's plan; thus, it was unnecessary for the military to work out a contingency plan against Berlin as a countermove to US action against Cuba.⁷⁰

After Kennedy's speech, diplomacy won out. The Cuban Missile Crisis ended without escalating into an all-out war between the Soviets and the US. On 28 October, Khrushchev,

⁶⁹ RGASPI, f. 89, opis 28, delo 14. Hoover Institution Archives.

⁷⁰ It is my argument that Berlin ceased to be a proverbial trip wire in the Cold War with the erection of the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961. With the Berlin Wall in place, Khrushchev believed the Berlin 'crisis' to be solved—a status quo was created in 1961.

through his Defense Minister, Malinovskii, issued Pliyev with orders not to allow anyone near the missiles; to not launch under any circumstances, and not to install the nuclear warheads.⁷¹ The Soviets removed their missiles from Cuba, allowing US military planes to inspect the removal by inspecting Soviet freighters with missiles uncovered on their decks from the air. Such a situation caused embarrassment not only to the crews of the freighters but to the Soviet military establishment as a whole. Both Pliyev and Gribkov were recommended for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union; however, if awarded, Pliyev would have become a third time recipient, more than Khrushchev at the time. Consequently, both Pliyev and Gribkov were awarded the Order of Lenin.

Fallout and Repercussions

Anatoli Gribkov argued that before the August putsch of 1991, “Soviet political leaders made the policy decisions; Soviet military men, even if they disagreed, obeyed.”⁷² Steven Zaloga states:

Operation Anadyr was as much the military’s fault as it was Khrushchev’s. Senior officers, such as Malinovskii and Biryuzov, had given him bad advice. But it was Khrushchev who paid for their mistakes. Although the armed forces do not appear to have played a major role in the 1964 coup to overthrow Khrushchev, it is quite likely that the KGB and Party conspirators knew that the armed forces would no longer support him as they had...⁷³

⁷¹ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 626.

⁷² Gribkov and Smith, 18.

⁷³ Zaloga, *Target America*, 217.

While I believe that the Soviet military has to share some culpability in the Cuba Missile Crisis, I do not agree with Zaloga when he states that specific military leaders gave “bad advice.”

Officers, such as Malinovskii, Biryuzov, and Zakharov, were given a task to complete by the Party. They acted in their roles as consultants and advisors to the political authorities in the Presidium. Let us remember that those officers owed their positions to Khrushchev, and they knew what had happened to Marshal Zhukov when he became ‘too independently-minded’ from Party discipline. Khrushchev’s ‘Stalingrad Group’ advisors toed the line and counseled Khrushchev in the manner they did in order to retain their positions within the military hierarchy. Those officers carried out the tasks assigned to them by their Party and their government. Officers, including, Moskalenko, who voiced concern were quickly removed and replaced with more pliable men. These officers did not toe the Party line and voiced military advice that went against what senior Party leaders wanted. While the Cuban Missile Crisis did not erupt into war, it certainly was politics through other means. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a political not a military gambit. Even the military officers themselves realized that, as can be seen from their own words quoted above.

The military was perceived as a scapegoat by the CPSU leadership for a failed Cuban fiasco. In all the speeches at the Party Plenum, held from 19-23 November 1962, there was no mention of the Cuban missile crisis, its outcomes, or what was to be next concerning Cuba. Khrushchev focused on the national economy, agriculture, and the upcoming changes in the Party’s structure.⁷⁴ However, on 7 November 1962, during the parade to commemorate the October Revolution, Malinovskii praised Khrushchev in finding a peaceful solution to the crisis,

⁷⁴ *Plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza 19-23 Noyabrya 1962g. Stenographicheskii otchet* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1963).

and added his endorsement of peaceful coexistence. Malinovskii seems to be fulfilling a political role with those words. The removal of the missiles from Cuba was an embarrassment for the Soviet military—one they would not soon forget. Supposedly, on 12 December 1962, at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet, while Khrushchev was speaking trying to justify his handling of the crisis, 35-40 high ranking military officers removed themselves from the session in a sign of disapproval by walking out.⁷⁵ That in itself, if it indeed occurred, was a strong gesture to the Party of the military's disapproval. Writing on the Cuban Missile Crisis while a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, Garthoff cited an unconfirmed intelligence report as his source of the possible displeasure shown by the military at the Supreme Soviet meeting in December.⁷⁶ Thus far, there are no reports to substantiate that intelligence report. There were other signs as well of the military's discomfort with the removal of missiles from Cuba. Interviewing Khrushchev several months after the end of the crisis, Norman Cousins was told by the Soviet leaders that the Soviet military leadership interpreted the crisis as, 'the biggest tragedy, as they [the military] saw it, was not that our country [USSR] might be devastated and everything lost, but that the Chinese or the Albanians would accuse us of appeasement or weakness.'⁷⁷ It seemed from that interview the military's concern was more concerned with fraternal communist reaction and the perception of weakness by a superpower when the Sino-Soviet split was building into a wide chasm. Despite a clear source from the military illustrating the frustration with the removal of weapons from Cuba, there are clear indications that displeasure was building against Khrushchev's

⁷⁵ Garthoff, 77.

⁷⁶ Garthoff, 77.

⁷⁷ Norman Cousins, 'The Cuban Missile Crisis: An Anniversary,' *Saturday Review* 5 (15 October 1977), 4. Cousins was in Moscow in 1963 to discuss with Khrushchev the release of clergy being held under house arrest in Ukraine and Czechoslovakia. The editorial was written for the 15th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

military gambit and policies. Even more important were the clear signs of significant cracks in the Stalingrad Group, created in January 1960 but widened by the winter of 1962-63.

Writing two months before Khrushchev's removal, Marshal Sokolovskii urged greater study of the requirements for a conventional war. Was the Soviet Union prepared to fight a local war that did not escalate to the use of nuclear weapons? Sokolovskii insisted that the Soviet military must prepare for a protracted, conventional war. He went as far as to state that the Cuban missile crisis showed the "insufficiency of a bare-minimum deterrent for a confrontation provoked by an adventurous gamble."⁷⁸ Across the armed forces, grumblings were heard from rank-and-file soldiers. Soldiers asked how the Cuban gamble had served Soviet interests, and "what do we have in common with Cuba, why are we being dragged into this fight?"⁷⁹ Above all, soldiers and conscripts, objected to the temporary cessation of discharges due to the Cuban crisis. Malinovskii reported all of this to Khrushchev in October.

The military had served a consultative role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. A plan that was doomed to fail from the beginning, even in the eyes of the high command, was approved in the belief that the CPSU leadership understood the Marxist-Leninist laws of social development. Secrecy was of the utmost importance for the successful deployment and stationing of missiles in Cuba. Without secrecy, as we know with hindsight, the Soviet missile deployment was doomed to fail. Biryuzov's mission to Cuba in May was nothing more than a trip to the Caribbean. Whether he came back with a positive or negative assessment of the probability of sending missiles surreptitiously to Cuba was beyond the military's purview at that point. Khrushchev

⁷⁸ V.D. Sokolovskii, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 28 August 1964.

⁷⁹ Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, 203.

was convinced. Khrushchev only needed to 'follow' procedures to give the air of the deployment having been a collective, collegial thought process of all Party and military leaders.

A sense of military professionalism can be found in the decision-making process of the Soviet high command during the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the removal of Moskalenko and Golikov, the military commanded acted within their role of counsellors and advisors to the Presidium on military matters. Officers close to Khrushchev advised him with information that supported decisions he wanted to make. Evidence was skewed despite sufficient knowledge as witnessed in the case of concealment of the missiles once deployed in Cuba. Moskalenko was opposed to the gambit and voiced his professional opinion to the detriment of his career. Fractures began to show among the Stalingrad Group. Officers such as Biryuzov kowtowed to Khrushchev, while others did not forget their duty to both the state and the military post they held. Even Zakharov became replaceable in 1963 when Khrushchev awarded the post of Chief of the Soviet General Staff to Biryuzov. Pliability was a necessary trait to be retained in command posts in Khrushchev's Soviet Union.

The Soviet high command did play a role in the decision-making processes in the Cuban Missile Crisis. That role was one of advisor and consultant. The actual decision to send missiles was made by the Party itself, and was the brainchild only of Khrushchev. The military was tasked with planning and implementing the deployment of missiles to Cuba. The planning began in the General Staff through the early summer months up to the actual deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in September. Nonetheless, there are many questions left unanswered as to what 'planning' occurred parallel to the deployment of missiles. Only once access is granted to carry out research in the Ministry of Defense and Soviet General Staff archives will we gain a

greater insight into the role that the Soviet high command played throughout the buildup to and the progression of the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, what is clear now is that Khrushchev removed officers who voiced political opinions during the crisis and replaced them with officers more prone to support his policies and certainly support the Cuban deployment. Combined with the reaction to Khrushchev's military policies first espoused at the January 1960 Supreme Soviet meeting, the Cuban Missile Crisis broke open the Stalingrad Group. Factions formed supporting Khrushchev's policies in support of their own careers and the Party leader's patronage and those officers whose expertise and educations prohibited them from toeing the Party line and voiced concerns over policies and certainly hair-brained schemes such as Cuba.

Conclusion

Writing a year after Khrushchev's ouster, Robert Conquest suggested that beyond the CPSU, only the military provided its members with a sense of professionalism and only the Soviet military could possibly challenge the CPSU for power.¹ Only in 1991, in the waning days of the Soviet Union, did some Soviet military officers ally themselves with the anti-reform, anti-Gorbachev members of the Party to attempt a coup against the ruling elite. Throughout its history the Soviet military served the Party against foreign aggression. Interactions between the CPSU and the Soviet military through the course of the Khrushchev era were marked by a steady development. Despite tense civil-military relations, the Soviet military was able to become more professionally-minded during the Khrushchev era as compared to the Stalinist era. Promoted by the Party to a degree, military professionalism was necessitated by the advent on newer, ever-progressing technologies, which in turn required longer study to develop expertise on modern weapons systems and tactics. Previous studies have characterised civil-military relations throughout the 1950s and 1960s at two ends of a spectrum. Viewed from Kolkowicz's conflict-driven, zero-sum prism, or Odom's cooperation-driven prism, civil-military relations in the Soviet Union go beyond just a characterisation of that relationship. Why were military leaders and Party officials in conflict or cooperating? For the duration of the Khrushchev era, civil-military relations fluctuated between conflict and cooperation between the Party leadership and the leadership of the military; thus, Colton's synthesis model has until now best explained civil-military relations in the 1950s and 1960s.

¹ Robert Conquest, *Power and Policy in the USSR, The Study of Soviet Dynasties* (New York; St. Marten's Press, 1965), 330.

Those fluctuations were governed by the personalities of those in leadership roles within the Party and military. More importantly, it was Khrushchev's selection of personality, or the selection of agents, into command posts within the Soviet military which characterised the nature of civil-military relations in the Soviet Union at some of the most tense times of the Cold War. Those agents, Zhukov, Malinovskii, Moskalenko et al, acknowledged the domain they represented in the military and the limitations and opportunities afforded to those agents within the confines of structure. Zhukov was enabled to become more politically vocal due to his post in the Presidium, as well as a key advisor as Minister of Defence. Nonetheless, there were clear lines of demarcation between the purview of the CPSU and that of the Soviet armed forces. The Party's role was to develop overall military doctrine and strategy and then rely on the Soviet military to carry out those ideas. The military believed it was the sole authority in tactics, training, military education, housing, and the overall well-being of officers and rank and file soldiers. When those boundaries were perceived by either sided to be overstepped by the other then friction increased, sometimes to the point of conflict, certainly as witnessed with Moskalenko's removal in 1962 when he spoke against a Party military, strategic decision that had already been made. A strong, collegial relationship between the Minister of Defence, and top commanders of the military, and Khrushchev provided for a sense of cooperation in civil-military relations as exemplified in Chapter two which examined Khrushchev's and Zhukov's cooperation concerning naval policies. Conflict also drove that relationship when personalities were at odds with each other, as exemplified by military officers actions taken during the Novocherkassk uprising. When conflict between Khrushchev and commander arose, it led to the replacement of that officers with someone who was more favorably predisposed toward

Khrushchev's thoughts on the military. That occurred with the removal of Zhukov in 1957, the choice not to replace Zhukov with Konev, and the replacement of Moskalenko (who was Khrushchev's man in the removal of Beria) with Biryuzov.

One of the common threads that spanned the Khrushchev era was that military officers, even when perceived as more pliable by Khrushchev, remained military professionals. Where military professionalism interfered with what he wanted, Khrushchev was able to replace officers with those he deemed more pliable who he perceived as more concerned with their careers than professional values. Moskalenko was replaced by Biryuzov as commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces when Moskalenko offered a negative opinion of the deployment of missiles to Cuba. Personalities drove civil-military relations in the Khrushchev era. The personalities controlling the institutions better explain the driving force of the conflict-cooperation model rather than the institutions themselves.

As personality, and the selection of personalities by Khrushchev to command, were the driving factor in civil-military relations in the Khrushchev era, this study has concentrated on the role of those individual agents in key events during that time period. Whether it was the primary leaders of the military, Zhukov and Malinovskii, or the Stalingrad Group, whose influence increased as Khrushchev consolidated power, if Khrushchev had a collegial personal relationship with those men, civil-military relations operated in a relatively cooperative fashion. However, even as one of the most cohesive command groups was promoted to prominent leadership roles in the military under Khrushchev, his own policy initiatives divided the Stalingrad Group into two distinct cohorts. As the fissures in the Stalingrad Group developed during the key debates in the 1960s on changes to military doctrine put forth by Khrushchev, those fissures widened and

deepened with the unfavorable, in the military's opinion, end to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Officers such as Biryuzov and Chuikov were more conservative and more pro-Khrushchev.

Those officers were conservative in the sense that they demurred to Khrushchev and supported his calls for military reform in order to advance their own careers rather than out of a sense of what was best for the Soviet military's needs. Those officers supported Khrushchev's policies over military concerns. Malinovskii was a moderate who put duty to the military above personal gain from blind support given to Khrushchev. Moderate officers generally understood both sides of the military debate, knowing that they owed their post-war promotions to Khrushchev but strongly felt that their military training and expertise could not allow them to support policies perceived as a detriment to their role as defenders of the USSR. In several speeches, outlined in chapter three, Malinovskii proved well-trained in the nuance of supporting both sides of the military argument - deferring to Khrushchev as Party leader but supporting the necessity of maintaining a conventional force capable of holding territory even in a future nuclear war. Grechko, Zakharov, and Krylov were moderate officers as well. Those moderate officers were more hesitant to support Khrushchev for personal gain, whereas those more conservative officers were more willing to bend to Khrushchev policy goals.

The debate on military strategy and doctrine ran the course of the Khrushchev era; however, it managed to severely split the Stalingrad Group of officers in the 1960s, especially after the Cuban Missile Crisis. As we saw in the first chapter, one group was concerned with Khrushchev's overreach into their perceived sole purview of tactics, training, and education. They were also concerned with the changes in doctrine that Khrushchev was espousing after January 1960. Those concerns could be construed by the Party to be encroaching on their

purview over broad, big picture doctrine and strategy decisions of the military. A more sycophantic group stood by Khrushchev despite policies that were against their institutional goals, while more professional officers publicly voiced their concerns of Khrushchev's military policies. Both factions agreed that their primary goal, or job, was the protection and defence of the Soviet Union from outward aggression. Differences arose between the factions on what was necessary to complete that goal and maintain a strong defensive posture.

Further illustrating the role of Khrushchev's selection of agents was the tenuous alliance of convenient necessity between Zhukov and Khrushchev until 1957. Throughout his military career, Zhukov epitomised a military professional, serving both tsar and commissar with distinction. While his strong-willed, charismatic, and sometimes hot-tempered, personality caused friction among his contemporaries in the Party and the military, Zhukov strove to better the overall readiness, advancement, and well-being of the Soviet army. He also felt strongly on the need to rein in party education and indoctrination within the military, which he believed was unnecessarily taking time away from military training. His attacks on the GPU were a line that was crossed. He had ventured into the purview of the CPSU's control of the military. As was stated in chapter two, Zhukov felt the need for Party education in the military was necessary in the 1920s but not in the 1950s. It was Zhukov's personality that caused cooperation and friction between the military and the Party leadership in the 1950s. In the end it was Zhukov's strong-willed personality that put him on a collision course with Khrushchev and the policies he advocated for the military. Khrushchev counted on the military's and Zhukov's support in his concentration of both Party and governmental power in one person. Zhukov participated in the arrest of Beria, but he was not alone; as other officers played just as important roles as was

witnessed in the case of Moskalenko. Zhukov, again along with other prominent officers, wrote articles in support of Khrushchev's military policies during the struggle with Malenkov over the leadership of the Party and military policies and doctrine. As has been argued the second chapter, that was the extent of Zhukov's political machinations. While he did play a political role, it can be viewed as certainly for military and personal reasons. Beria had harassed Zhukov into expulsion from Moscow after WW II; thus, the idea of a personal vendetta is not out of the question. In supporting Khrushchev over Malenkov, Zhukov was supporting the Party leader whose position was going to best help the military. Zhukov and other officers acted as a military political action committee against Malenkov's proposed cuts and reductions. In both scenarios, Zhukov had been co-opted by Khrushchev for the his support against factions in the leadership struggle, but when given the platform, Zhukov used it for personal and military gains.

The same argument has been made for Zhukov's participation against the Anti-Party Group in 1957, just months before his own removal. Although Zhukov spoke at the Plenum called to consider the motives of the Anti-Party Group, his primary role was one of transportation coordination. Using military transport planes, Zhukov was able to move the Central Committee members from across the Soviet Union to converge on Moscow, where a group of CC members had already established their authority in personnel decisions over the Presidium. An impassioned speech, harkening to the ideals of the Twentieth Party Congress, was Zhukov's personal *modus operandi* of tacitly supporting Khrushchev. Zhukov, and other officers, personally backed Khrushchev and his supporters within the CC over those attempting to remove Khrushchev. As a Presidium and CC member he the ability to speak at those meetings and, along with the KGB, use his position as Minister of Defence in support of Khrushchev.

Where doctrine and military policies were concerned with the development and implementation of new technologies, Zhukov and Khrushchev were in basic agreement of the necessity of those quickly developing military technologies. Zhukov supported the development of nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems, namely missiles, manned, strategic bombers, and submarine-launched missiles. In 1955, Zhukov defended Khrushchev's removal of Admiral Kuznetsov from his post as head of the Soviet Navy. Kuznetsov advocated the maintenance of the Soviet surface fleet instead of Khrushchev's focus on submarines, primarily nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines. In other aspects of the debate over technology and doctrine, Zhukov veered from Khrushchev's path. It is true that Zhukov supported new nuclear technology, but he did not advocate the severe reductions to conventional forces that Khrushchev championed throughout his tenure. Nuclear weapons did not negate the power of conventional land forces in an army, they merely changed the nature of the battlefield. Nuclear battlefields still held a place for conventional arms.

Civil-military relations throughout the Khrushchev era were affected by an ongoing debate over Soviet military doctrine and strategy, specifically the impact of quickly developing, modern military technologies on the modern battlefield. Not only during Zhukov's tenure, but perhaps even more tenuous after, the Soviet military and Khrushchev clashed over the impact of nuclear weaponry on Soviet doctrine and strategic thought. Debated not only by military theorists and officers, but by engineers and politicians, the discourse was carried into the public sphere in newspaper publications as well as monographs. The Soviet press, both civilian and military, first facilitated an ongoing debate during the internal leadership struggle until the removal of Malenkov from the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers in February 1955.

Khrushchev was supported by the Soviet military in articles published by officers who disagreed with Malenkov's policies of refocusing the Soviet economy towards the consumer sector at the expense of the heavy industry and the military-industrial complex.

Once his political power had been consolidated in the 1950s, Khrushchev implemented reform with the Soviet military aimed at what he believed to be a revolution in military thought and doctrine based around nuclear weapons and their attendant delivery systems. Throughout Soviet history military technology developments have been followed by a 'debate' on the effect of that technology of warfare. From Svechin, Frunze, and Tukhachevskii to Rotmistrov, Sokolovskii, and Talenskii, officers have been at the forefront of that debate. By the 1960s, the Stalingrad group of officers had become a stratified body. Split over their perceptions on the future of warfare, specifically the need for conventional forces in a nuclear age on the battlefield, officers such as Rotmistrov, Sokolovskii, and Grechko argued for the maintenance of conventional forces as well as the development of the Strategic Rocket Forces and nuclear arms. Even Malinovskii, as Minister of Defence, supported those officers; even while he had to serve Khrushchev, Malinovskii often opposed Khrushchev's policy of sole reliance on nuclear weapons. Khrushchev had elevated Malinovskii to head the Ministry of Defence precisely because he thought Malinovskii's personality was more pliable. Khrushchev believed that Malinovskii would have been more supportive of his military policies in relations to nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Other officers, specifically Moskalenko, Chuikov, and Biryuzov, were more conservative, and they bucked military professionalism, ardently supporting Khrushchev's policies and reforms on the military. Khrushchev lost support for most of his policies and reforms he attempted on the Soviet military from officers and ministers alike.

Nonetheless, Khrushchev pursued policies that would put him on a collision course with an increasing sense of military professionalism among the officer corps.

That growing sense of military professionalism reached a zenith throughout the events of 1962. While planning and making preparations for the Cuban missile deployment, Khrushchev and the leadership had to face growing popular resentment of their policies that reached a boiling point in June in Novocherkassk. As with previous cases, Novocherkassk and the Cuban Missile Crisis illustrated the importance of military purviews and perceptions that officers were being asked to compromise their professionalism. Issa Pliyev was given command of the Group of Soviet Forces Cuba over a more qualified candidate with greater knowledge of ballistic missile technology due to Pliyev's conduct during operations in Novocherkassk. Whereas Pliyev argued with Presidium members on the ground in Novocherkassk, he did not openly confront the ideas of Party control over the military and the military's role in internal matters. In Novocherkassk, Pliyev managed both officers under his command, who believed the military was above internal conflict, and those orders coming from Malinovskii to restore order in the city. Novocherkassk was a prime example of the conflict between the Kremlin and the military. The Party leadership wanted nothing more than the military to restore order to the city through the use of force. However, internal conflict was beyond the scope of operations according to military officers. Only foreign aggression, which threatened the security of the Soviet state, fell under the auspices of the military purview. Officers who questioned the Party and government's actions or motives were replaced and more pliant officers were appointed in their place. General Shaposhnikov questioned orders to use force against the civilian population in Novocherkassk. After the events, he questioned the leadership and was subsequently arrested. His perceived notion that

the military, as most officers saw it as well, was to combat foreign aggression, was put to the test at Novocherkassk. Shaposhnikov forbade the use of force by the soldiers under his command both at NEVZ and on the Tuzlov bridge the following day. He did not compromise his military professionalism, but it did cost him his career in the Soviet armed forces.

Moskalenko and Golikov faced similar judgements when tasked to participate in the Cuban deployment, which they did not fully support. In May 1962, each had criticised Khrushchev's plans for the Cuban operation. As was stated in the fourth chapter, both Moskalenko and Golikov were relieved of their command and replaced by Biryuzov and Epishev respectfully. Biryuzov and Epishev were viewed as more pliable, and supportive of Khrushchev's outlook for the operations. It was Biryuzov who, upon his return from Cuba, believed ballistic missiles could be easily disguised as palm trees. Sergei Khrushchev argues that his father was led astray by the military during the planning leading up to the Cuban deployment. Chapter four argues that the military did its utmost to voice concern, which Khrushchev did not listen to. Khrushchev only wanted to hear a military opinion that was in parallel with his own viewpoint. When conflict arose, and as strong personalities voiced concern, Khrushchev chose to ignore reason, and found cooperation with those officers he appointed from within the Stalingrad Group. The buildup for Cuba and the discussions on feasibility have also shown the fractured nature of the Stalingrad Group after the 1960 Supreme Soviet speech by Khrushchev. It was Moskalenko and Golikov, two members of the Group, who were replaced by two other members, Biryuzov and Epishev, whose loyalty to Khrushchev was stronger than their own sense of military professionalism.

In each chapter above, the conflict-cooperation model of civil-military relations has been re-examined with an emphasis placed on the primacy of the selection by Khrushchev of individual actors and their personalities to command posts. Khrushchev chose to elevate officers to leadership posts that supported his policies and those who he had a personal history with going back to the Battle of Stalingrad and the Soviet offensives toward the west beginning in 1943; his personal histories with officers became a necessity for promotion to command posts in the 1950s and 1960s. Colton's model of Soviet civil-military relations has been expanded on by placing the importance on the primacy of individual agents rather than institutions. Individuals, and their appointment to key military commands, have been examined to determine how conflict and cooperation drove the relationship between the Party and the Soviet armed forces. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the selection of agents was important to understanding how Khrushchev and the key military commanders worked together. Disagreements occurred but were over-ridden by the loyalty of officers. Out of a strong sense of loyalty to the state, who ever ruled whether tsar or commissar, the military served within their perceived operational parameters. At the same time, where that sense of professionalism interfered with what Khrushchev wanted, as that Stalingrad Group fractured over supporting Khrushchev's military reforms and policies, he was able to find more pliable officers who presumably were more concerned about their own careers than professional values.

Appendix A: List of Military Commands and Officers 1953-1964

(* denotes member of the Stalingrad Group)

Minister of Defence

1953 - January 1955: N. Bulganin
January 1955 - October 1957: G.K. Zhukov
October 1957 - March 1967: R.Ya. Malinovskii*

Chief of the Soviet General Staff

1952 - 1960: V.D. Sokolovskii
1960 - 1963: M.V. Zakharov*
1963 - 1964: S.S. Biryuzov*
1964 - 1971: M.V. Zakharov*

Commander of Soviet Ground Forces

March 1955 - 1956: I.S. Konev
1956 - 1957: R.Ya. Malinovskii*
1957 - 1960: A.A. Grechko*
1960 - 1964: V.I. Chuikov*

Commander of Air Defence Forces

1953 - 1954: K.A. Vershinin
1954 - 1955: L.A. Govorov*
1955 - 1962: S.S. Biryuzov*
1962 - 1966: V.A. Sudets

Commander of Air Forces

1947 - 1957: P.F. Zhigarev
1957 - 1969: K.A. Vershinin

Commander of the Navy

1951 - 1956: N.G. Kuznetsov
1956 - 1985: S.G. Gorshkov

Commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces

1959 - 1960: M.I. Nedelin
1960 - 1962: K.S. Moskalenko*
1962 - 1963: S.S. Biryuzov*
1963 - 1972: N.I. Krylov*

Commander of the Warsaw Pact

1955 - 1960: I.S. Konev

1960 - 1967: A.A. Grechko*

Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces Germany

1949 - 1953: V.I. Chuikov*

1953 - 1957: A.A. Grechko*

1957 - 1960: M.V. Zakharov*

1960 - 1961: I.I. Yakubovskii

1961 - 1962: I.S. Konev

1962 - 1965: I.I. Yakubovskii

Commander of the Northern Group of Forces, Poland

1952 - 1955: M.P. Konstantinov

1955 - 1958: K.N. Galitskii

1958 - 1963: G.I. Khetagurov

1963 - 1964: S.S. Maryakhin

Commander of the Moscow Military District

1949 - 1953: P.A. Artemeyev

1953 - 1960: K.S. Moskalenko*

1960 - 1963: N.I. Krylov*

1963 - 1968: A.P. Beloborodov

Commander of the Leningrad Military District

1953 - 1957: M.V. Zakharov*

1957 - 1960: N.I. Krylov*

1960 - 1963: M.I. Kazakov*

Commander of the Kiev Military District

1945 - 1953: A.A. Grechko*

1953 - 1960: V.I. Chuikov*

1960 - 1965: P.K. Koshevoi

Commander of the Baltic Military District

1945 - 1954: I.Kh. Bagramyan*

1954 - 1958: A.V. Gorbato*

1958 - 1959: P.I. Batov*

1959 - 1963: I.I. Gusakovskii

Commander of the Belorussian Military District

1949 - 1960: S.K. Timoshenko

1960 - 1961: V.N. Komarov
1961 - 1964: V.A. Penkovskii

Commander of the Carpathian Military District

1951 - 1954: I.S. Konev
1955 - 1958: P.I. Batov*
1958 - 1964: A.L. Getman

Commander of the Far Eastern Military District

1953- 1956: R.Ya. Malinovskii*
1956 - 1961: V.A. Penkovskii
1961 - 1963: Ya.G. Kreyzer
1963 - 1967: I.G. Pavlovskii

Commander of the North Caucasus Military District

1953 - 1958: A.I. Yeremenko*
1958 - 1968: I.A. Pliyev

Commander of the Odessa Military District

1951- 1954: K.N. Galitskii
1954 - 1959: A.I. Radziyevskii
1959 - 1967: A.Kh. Babadzhanian

Commander of the Siberian Military District

1953 - 1957: N.P. Putkov
1957- 1960: P.K. Koshevoi
1960 - 1964: G.V. Baklanov

Commander of the Transbaikal Military District

1953 - 1956: Ye. G. Trotsenko
1956 - 1958: D.D. Lelyushenko
1958 - 1960: Ya.G. Kreyzer
1960 - 1966: D.F. Alekseyev

Commander of the Transcaucasus Military District

1950 - 1954: A.I. Antonov
1954 - 1957: I.I. Fediuninskii
October 1957 - December 1957: K.K. Rokossovskii
1958 - 1961: K.N. Galitskii
1961 - 1968: A.T. Stuchenko

Commander of the Turkestan Military District

1953 - 1957: A.A. Luchinskii

1957 - 1965: I.I. Fediuninskii

Commander of the Urals Military District

1953 - 1956: M.I. Kazakov*

1956 - 1958: N.I. Krylov*

1958 - 1960: D.D. Lelyushenko

1960 - 1961: Ya. G. Kreyzer

1961 - 1965: I.V. Tutarinov

Commander of the Volga Military District

1953 - 1957: V.I. Kuznetsov

1957 - 1961: V.N. Komarov

1960 - 1961: A.T. Stuchenko

1961 - 1963: I.G. Pavlovskii

1963 - 1965: N.G. Lyashchenko

Appendix B: Size of Soviet Army, 1950s - 1960s

Year	Authorized Size of Conventional Armed Forces	Actual Size of Conventional Forces	Reductions (Carried out or Planned)	Size of Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN)
March 1953	5,396,039	not available	600,000	
August 1955	4,815,870	4,637,523	640,000	
January 1956	4,406,216	4,147,496	1,200,000	
January 1958			300,000	
January 1960			1,200,000 not completed (included 250,000 officers)	43rd Rocket Army 50th Rocket Army
January 1962				43rd Rocket Army 50th Rocket Army 33rd Guards Rocket Army 53rd Rocket Army

Source: Size of the Soviet conventional forces were compiled from Matthew Evangelista, “Why Keep Such an Army? Khrushchev’s Troop Reductions,” Working Paper No. 19, *Cold War International History Project*, December 1997, p. 4-6. “Zapiska G. Zhukova i V. Sokolovskogo v TsK KPSS o khode vypolneniia postanovleniia soveta ministrov sssr ot 12 avgusta 1956 g. o sokrashchenii chislennosti sovetskoi armii i s predlozheniiami po dalneishem sokrashcheniu vooruzhenykh sil sssr, 9 fevralia 1956 g.” *Voennye arkhivy rossii*, 1 (1993), 283.

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Appendix C: Publications and Presentations from Thesis

“Georgii Zhukov- The Model Officer,” Association of Ethnicity and Nationalism Annual Conference, London School of Economics, 13-15 March 2010 (to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*)

“Operation ‘Anadyr’ Der sowjetische militärische Führungsstab und die Kubakrise 1962,” in *Krisen im kalten krieg*. eds., Bernt Griener, Christian Müller, and Dierk Walter, Hamburg, Germany: Hamburger Edition HIS, 2008.

“Personalities in Conflict and Cooperation: Civil-Military Relations in the Khrushchev Era,” BASEES Conference, Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge, 29-31 March 2008

“The Soviet Military at Novocherkassk: The Apex of Military Professionalism in the Khrushchev Era,” in *Soviet State and Society Under Khrushchev*. Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith, eds. London: Routledge, 2009.

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Russian State Archive for Contemporary History, (RGANI), Moscow, Russia
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